

Making Herbal Honey Wine – Homemade Mead

There are plenty of kits available for making Homemade Mead, but really, you can do without the complicated supplies. After all, our ancestors made mead thousands of years ago, and didn't have Amazon or brewing clubs to supply them.

Here are the absolute essentials to make Homemade Mead:

A 1 gallon wide-mouth container. I use a gallon sized pickle jar I got from a local restaurant.

A 1 gallon glass jug with a narrow top. I purchased a gallon of store-bought apple juice just for the jar.

A jar with a lid for bottling the finished mead. I do recommend investing in the Grolsch flip top bottles

An airlock or a balloon

Cheesecloth or a piece of muslin

A wooden spoon

3 cups of honey

12 cups of water

Process

Time frame: 2-4 weeks.

1. Mix honey and water in your wide mouth gallon jar. If you plan to add fresh fruit or herbs, now is the time to do so. Stir several times daily using your wooden spoon - don't rinse or wash the spoon in between! Cover the jar with cheesecloth or a coffee filter and lay your wooden spoon on top.
2. When you start to see bubbles in the honey water, you will know the fermentation process has started. At this point, transfer the honey water to the gallon-sized jug with a narrow top.
3. Most people use an airlock to capture the carbon dioxide released from the fermentation process and to keep bacteria from entering the brew. But we use a simple balloon. I like to watch the balloon slowly inflate as the yeast does its

work, and I can monitor the process daily as I lift one corner of the balloon to "burp" the honey wine.

4. Continue to release the Co₂ from the balloon daily (lift the corner off the jar). As the yeast use up the honey, there will be less Co₂ released and the balloon will no longer inflate. Depending on the temperature in your home, this could take days or weeks.
5. Once the fermentation process has slowed, your honey wine is ready. At this point you will want to place a cap on the bottle. But be careful - there can still be some fermenting and Co₂ produced - so you will want to either drink your wine soon, or check it occasionally and let some of the gas out to prevent the bottle from breaking due to gas build up.

A few notes:

I keep my fermenting mead on the kitchen counter where I am reminded to "tend" to it. Using a wooden spoon, without washing or rinsing between stirs, helps draw the wild yeasts to the spoon, which will then be incorporated into the wine.

Cool temperatures will make the process take longer.

The mead will continue a slow fermentation process, and the flavor will change gradually with time. I enjoy drinking some of my homemade mead as soon as it is ready, and saving some for later.