

## **BASIC SMALL MEAD**

Cher Feinstein

NOTE: All equipment mentioned below is assumed to be either well-cleaned or sterilized, as needed.

In a 1 gallon enamel pot, simmer the following until the infusion is done to taste: 2-3 whole cloves, lightly cracked; 2 sticks of cinnamon, broken up; 2 thin slices peeled fresh ginger root. Add 2-4 tsp. orange peel (how much depends on the honey-- with orange blossom honey use less, for example) and simmer a little longer.

Add enough water to bring the volume up to 3 quarts. Bring back up to a simmer. Add 2 lbs honey, stirring constantly. Some of the warm water can be ladled back into the honey container to rinse it.

DO NOT BOIL! Continue to simmer at a moderate rate, skimming off any white scum that forms on the top. If the scum is yellow, the heat is too high. Once no more scum forms, turn off the heat, place the lid on the pot, and leave overnight.

The next day, strain out as many of the spice particles as practicable. Pitch the yeast. Replace the pot lid; the condensation on it will form a seal.

Twelve hours later, rack the mead into a gallon jug, leaving the dregs of the yeast. After racking, top off the jug if needed, filling it to the base of the neck. Take a piece of clean paper towel, fold it into quarters, and put it over the mouth of the jug. Secure with a rubber band. Allow to ferment 36 hours. If the paper towel becomes fouled during this period, replace it with another.

After 36 hours, taste the mead. If it is still too sweet for your taste, ferment longer. Repeat this as necessary, until a desirable level of sweetness/dryness is achieved.

Place mead in refrigerator for 8-12 hours, then rack into a fresh gallon jug. Seal new jug tightly, and place in refrigerator to carbonate for 12 hours.

Once the mead is nicely carbonated, add 1/4 cup of vodka or grain alcohol to the jug to kill off the yeast. Rack into a fresh jug again, seal tightly, and place in refrigerator for 3-4 days.

The mead may then be bottled; Grolsch bottles work extremely well for this purpose.

This is a "quickest" mead, drinkable in 2 weeks. However, it does improve considerably with age, and letting it age for at least a couple of months before drinking is recommended. This mead is excellent chilled.