

Five Gallon Melomel Mead Recipe

Everything in RED is optional

Equipment

- Bottling / Brewing Bucket & Lid
- Carboys
 - 5.0 Secondary & 6.5 Primary
- Air Locks & drilled stoppers
- Long Spoon or Spatula
- Thermometer (Hand held or digital)
- Hydrometer and Test receiver
- Transfer Hoses
 - Short for bottling & Long for racking
- Two cup measuring cup
- ~50 12 oz. Beer Bottles (Amber)
 - 24 wine bottles
- Bottle Capper & ~50 Crown Caps
 - 24 Corks & Corker
- Fermometer (Stick on for Carboy)
- Bottle Brush
- Turkey Baster and or Wine Thief
- Labels & Elmers glue stick
- Large Funnel
- Lee's stirrer & Electric Drill
- Bottle Filling Wand
- Paint Strainer Bag & String
- 2 Gallon Pot with lid
- 2 Liter Erlenmeyer Flask
- Stir Plate & Stir Bar
- Flat glass "tear drops"

Ingredients

- 2 – 5g Red Star Cote Des Blancs dry Yeast Packets
 - Produces 14-15% ABV and has no noticeable Fusels/Esters after 6 Months of age!
- 7 tsp DAP / Fermaid K Mixture (2 to 1)
- 4 Gallons Spring Water
- 18 Pounds Honey
 - 10 - 12 Hibiscus Tea Bags
 - 6 - 12 Pounds Fruit (Depending upon the fruit)
- Star San (Liquid)
- 2 tsp Potassium Carbonate (Bicarbonate)
- Air Lock Liquid (Vodka or other spirit)
- Super Klear KC Flocculent. (2 Pouch Packet)
- Pectic Enzyme (Just in-case)

RECIPE NOTES

This Melomel recipe works for me as I very much like the end product. Some techniques may or may not be "typical" or "recommended" by others, and as far as I am concerned that is just fine with me. Each of us has our own techniques, practices and protocols that we prefer. Our Meads are unique and should reflect our own personal preferences. What works for you or I may, or may not work or be preferred by others and that's OK. Differences are not wrong, just different!

When developing this recipe I searched for common themes, techniques, practices and protocols on the forums, then I perfected my recipe. I have gotten here with some experimentation, but due to the wealth of information out there on the forums it has been wonderfully limited. As with any recipe it will continue to be perfected as I find "new" ways of doing things.

I would encourage you to use, edit, change and experiment with this recipe as you see fit. However if you do change anything, I likely can't help with questions as I may or may not have tried what you are doing.

You will notice a couple of things with this recipe that are a bit "different" than what many folks recommend:

- I use more Nutrient (DAP / Fermaid K) than the YAN calculators call for, but less than some on the forums.
- I do not "sweeten" the Mead once complete. If you follow this recipe it goes to just off-dry 1.005 +- a bit.
- I do not use sulfate or sorbate etc. to "inhibit" the yeast. (I am sensitive to the "ates")
- I clarify using Time, KC Super Klear and Cold Crashing.
- Even after what appears to be a crystal clear Mead when bottling there will often be a very small amount of sediment in the bottles after six months or so. Very rarely a small amount of carbonation will be produced as well. Usually due to not taking the time while clarifying that I should. Thus the use of beer bottles and crown caps for bottling.

Mead Notes

PROCEDURE NOTES

- Sanitation is critical - **EVERYTHING** that touches the Must shall be sanitized. (Including hands)
 - Star San - 1 ounce in 5 gallons of water with a 2 minute soak and no rinse required
- Temperature is very important!
 - Hit temperature targets 62-66 for Red Star Cotes Des Blanc Yeast during fermentation.
 - Hold as constant as possible mid to low range of the yeast tolerance if not able to hit target.
- Your Mead is only as good as the ingredients you use.
 - Use the best quality Spring water, Honey, Tea and Fruit your budget allows.
- Specific Gravity readings are important!
 - Example - Potential Alcohol OG 1.110 – FG 1.005 = 105 and $105 * 135 = 14.17$ ABV (Semi Dry Finish)
- Hit the targets for a Staggered Nutrient Addition Protocol as close as possible
 - A 1/3 & 2/3 SNA + Aeration & CO2 release keep your yeast happy and shorten the time it takes to ferment.
 - Example - OG 1.110 = Sugar Breaks 1/3 @ 1.070 & 2/3 @ 1.035
- Aggressively Aerate 2X's per day up to 1/3 sugar break to keep your yeast healthy and reproducing.
 - Air is your enemy **after 1/3 Sugar Break** - No Splashing! While Racking etc, after 1/3 break
- CO2 Inhibits Yeast - Release CO2 daily up to 2/3 sugar break.
- Making a yeast starter for 1 to 3 days gives your yeast a head start and jump starts the ferment.
- Time is your friend. - Stick to the schedule if at all possible;
 - If problems arise wait it out, often it will "correct itself"
 - If time does not work, check Temperature, pH & SG adjust appropriately.
 - If you still problems then ask the smart folks on the forums for advice.
- Visual indications Taste, Smell and Specific Gravity readings are a great way to determine how well your Mead is progressing.
 - Keep impeccable notes and record your observations during each step in the process.
 - Trust me your memory is not as good as you think it is.

Procedure

1. Prepare a Yeast Starter
 - a. Condition 6 cups of water to room temperature. (Use water from the 4 gallons of Spring Water.)
 - b. Add 1tsp DAP/Fermaid K mixture. (Or 1 tsp Go-Ferm)
 - c. Stir in 1 cup honey. (~12 ounces)
 - d. Check to be certain the ~7 cups of water / honey are at temperature, target 75° - 85°F
 - i. Add two Red Star Cote Des Blanc dry Yeast Packets (10grams) stir to evenly distribute.
 - ii. **Pour into an Erlenmeyer flask and loosely cover with a clean cloth or aluminum foil.**
 1. **Allow to sit on the stir plate at Room Temp 64-66 Deg F for 24 – 72 Hours.**
 2. If no stir plate then swirl it every time you think about it to incorporate air.
2. Prepare the Must
 - a. Water (Bottled Spring Water)
 - i. Bring to room temp the 4 gal Spring water. (Less yeast starter volume).
 1. Steep 10 – 12 tea bags 10 min in 1.5 gal of water, cool to room temp.
 - Hibiscus Tea or Hibiscus & Orange Zinger impart some great mouth feel, color & flavor.
 - Other Teas work too – Black Tea, Spiced tea blends etc...
 - ii. Pour remaining 2 gallons of water and the tea into a Brew bucket
 - b. Honey
 - i. Set the bottled honey in warm water for 15– 30 min. (Honey flows easier when warm.)
 - ii. Slowly add the honey to the Brew bucket stirring continually.
 - iii. Pour some of the water back into each honey jug and shake to be sure you got all the honey.
 - c. Check gravity of the honey / water with a Hydrometer.
 - i. Adjust the OG to a SG of 1.110 to 1.120.
 - Be sure to account for 68 Deg F temperature adjustment.
 - ii. Add Honey to increase and water to decrease.
 - d. Add 2tsp Potassium carbonate and stir.
 - e. Add 2 tsp DAP/Fermaid K (2-1 Blend) and stir.
 - f. Check Temperature
 - i. Temp of the Must shall be 65 -75Deg F
 - ii. Yeast mixture shall be within 10 Deg F of the Must and not > 80 Deg F
 - g. Pour the Yeast Starter into the Brew bucket.

Mead Notes

- h. Whip air into the Must with the lees stirrer and drill or stir vigorously with your long handle spoon or spatula.
 - i. Transfer to the 6.5 Gallon Carboy (My preference) or leave in the brew bucket.
 - i. Bring to the brew area & Maintain 62° - 66°F.
 - i. Below 62°F fermentation will slow, above 68°F may cause off flavors.
3. Nutrition / accelerator
- STIR AND RELEASE THE CO2 BEFORE ADDING THE ENERGIZER! - START VERY SLOWLY**
- a. Aeration – 2X’s a day until 1/3 Sugar Break. Then daily release CO2 until 2/3 Sugar Break.
 - i. Using a Lee’s stirrer by hand release the CO2 and stir **START VERY SLOWLY**, there is a delay in foaming and Mead fountains are not fun, then when it settles down stir using a drill and the lees stirrer more aggressively until bubbles / CO2 are no longer released.
 - b. The staggered nutrients are:
 - i. 2 tsp DAP/Fermaid K (2-1 Blend) at as close as you can get to the 1/3 and 2/3 Break
 1. Calculate breaks based upon OG and expected FG
 2. With an OG of 1.110 & Expected FG of 1.005 - Staggered Nutrient Addition 1/3 @ 1.070 and 2/3 @ 1.035.
4. Initial Fermentation (Primary 25 – 30 days)
- a. Allow to ferment for 25-30 days. (INCLUDES NUTRIENT ADDITION TIME)
 - i. When the airlock bubble rate in the air lock is > 1 bubble every 60 seconds primary is done.
 1. **Warning** Bubble rate is an inexact estimate. However, can be an indication of how well the ferment is progressing.
 - ii. Check SG and if near 1.010 +/- a bit then Rack to Fruit / Secondary.
 - b. Remove the airlock from the Carboy and siphon the Must into another carboy or bottling bucket using a long transfer hose being careful to leave behind the Lee's.
5. Racking to Fruit (Secondary 10 – 30 days)
- a. If using fresh fruit freeze the fruit for at least 24 hours and thaw to room temp.
 - b. Add the fruit and juice from the thawing process to the Mead.
 - i. **If using a big mouth bubbler or bucket use a paint strainer bag with a handful of marbles to sink it.**
 - ii. **If using a carboy just push the fruit through the opening.**
 - c. Rack off the fruit after:
 - i. 8 to 10 days - If small seeds (Strawberries, Blackberries, Raspberries, Cranberries etc.)
 - ii. 20 to 30 days - If no seeds (Blueberries, Cherries with pits removed, Seedless Oranges, etc.)
 1. **See Fruit addition and flavor profile chart at the end of this recipe.**
 - d. Punch down or stir the fruit each 1 or 2 days. (If not using a fruit bag or it did not sink.)
 - e. Rack to tertiary after 10 - 30 days (Depends upon the fruit & fruit flavor you want.)
 - i. Rack off the Lees and leave behind the fruit.
 - ii. **This is where you would add the sulfate / phosphate etc. to inhibit the yeast if you were so inclined.**
6. Tertiary. (60-120 days in Tertiary)
- a. Rack off lee’s each time 1/4” to 1/2” Lees are accumulated until crystal clear. (60-120 Days)
 - i. Remove the airlock from the Carboy and siphon the Mead into another carboy using a long transfer hose being careful to leave behind the Lee's
 - ii. Top off to remove head space with sanitized flat marbles or another “Like” Mead.
7. Clarifying
- a. Clarifying (Even though the Mead looks clear after Tertiary complete the following.)
 - i. **Cold Crash for 3 – 5 days**
 - ii. Add KC Super-Kleer to the carboy.
 1. Dissolve the first packet in a few ounces of warm water, add to the Mead and gently stir, wait an hour or more.
 2. Dissolve the second packet in a few ounces of warm water, add to the Mead and gently stir. Hold for 24-48 hours to settle out.
 - iii. If still hazy it is likely pectin haze.
 1. Add 2tsp Pectin Enzyme and wait 3 – 5 days
 - iv. Rack off Lees and Check SG

Mead Notes

9. Bottle it and store it!
 - a. Clean and sanitize the bottles and caps or corks.
 - i. Fill bottles to 1" below the cap or cork
 - b. Taste at bottling and increments of 60 days after bottling.
 - i. Most often is "drinkable" and "good" at 60 days after bottling
 - ii. In my Humble Opinion to be considered Very Good to Excellent takes a year or two.
 1. It only gets better with age!
10. Serving
 - a. Best served @ 50-55 Deg F (If young)
 - i. Use a Wine Fridge to store your Mead.
 - ii. If no Wine Fridge open a refrigerated bottle pour and let stand at room temp for 10 minutes.
 - b. If sediment in the bottle slowly decant the Mead leaving behind any sediment as it does provide a bit of cloudiness in the glass and does carry some flavor. (I don't care for either.)

Enjoy your journey! You will be able to make some very good to amazing Meads with this recipe.

Fruit Addition Chart

All of these Fruit additions would take place in Secondary (After freezing and thawing and are for a 5 gallon batch).

8 – 10 Days

Raspberries – Blackberries - Cranberries

Mild Fruit Character – 3 to 5 lbs

Medium Fruit Character – 6 to 8 lbs

Strong Fruit Character – 9 lbs or more

Strawberries

Mild Fruit Character – 5 to 7 lbs

Medium Fruit Character – 8 to 10 lbs

Strong Fruit Character – 11 to 13 lbs

24 – 30 Days

Blueberries, Cherries (Sweet) Pears, Apples

Mild Fruit Character – 5 to 7 lbs

Medium Fruit Character – 8 - 10 lbs

Strong Fruit Character – 11 lbs or more

Citrus Fruits (Lemons, Limes , Oranges)

Mild Fruit Character – 5 to 6 lbs

Medium Fruit Character – 7 to 8 lbs

Strong Fruit Character – 9 lbs or more

Sour Cherries, Peaches, Plums

Mild Fruit Character – 4 lbs to 5 lbs

Medium Fruit Character – 6 to 8 lbs

Strong Fruit Character – 9 lbs or more