

## Wild Cider + Mead Fermentation

### Some traditional ferments:

- Basque sidra: Dry and sour, still, sharps and bittersharps
- Norman cidre: Dry, naturally carbed, cool & slow fermentations (keeving), bittersweets
- Welsh and English cider and scrumpy: Dry, funky styles from bittersweets, bittersharps
- Cyser, pyment: Cider + mead, wine + mead
- Methlegin: Spiced or herbal mead
- Braggot: Mead + hops and/or wort

### Cider process

- Select fruit
  - Cider: Sharps, bittersharps, bittersweets preferable, though can amend with tannin or added wood at the end of fermentation. Mostly sweets/sharps commercially available
- Grind fruits - grinder or juicer
- Press - press or juicer
- Measure sugars (ranges widely - 1.040-1.055)
- Check for fermentation - may need to stir
- Monitor over 4-7 months and package when gravity reaches 1.000 or stable. Sulfite, back sweeten, and amend tannins if desired. If you don't sulfite, assume any bottling sugar will completely ferment.

### Mead

- Dilute raw honey at a volume ratio of 1:4 to 1:8 (12-6% finished abv)
- Stir to induce a wild fermentation - until air bubbles form, may need to stir multiple days
- Airlock and check back when vigorous bubbling subsides - monitor for a stuck fermentation (solution: add yeast nutrient and STIR)
- Monitor over 4-10 months and package when gravity reaches 1.000 or stable. Sulfite, back sweeten, and amend tannins if desired. If you don't sulfite, assume any bottling sugar will completely ferment.

### Notes to consider:

- Acetobacter: avoid by keeping your airlocks full and keep fermentations in a cool place.
- Sulfur: reductive environment - not enough dissolved oxygen (more stirring)
- Light isn't a huge problem unless you are using hops. Avoid direct, prolonged light - but without hops there is nothing to "skunk"

Good cider yeasts if you want to pitch something anyway: cider or white wine yeasts work well, including Red Star Cote Des Blanc, Montrachet, Premier Blanc, and Premier Cuvee

Apple varieties available locally (I recommend Brown's Orchard in PA): Jonathan, Rome Beauty, Crispin, Stayman Winesap, York Imperial, Northern Spy