Classic honey mead

A dry, still mead that lets the honey lead. Floral character and colour depend on the honey you choose.

5 L starting must; about 4-4.5 L bottled | Still, alcoholic | Allow several months



Ingredients

- 1.4 kg honey
- Drinking water to make 5 L total honey-water mixture
- 2 g Lalvin 71B wine yeast
- About 4 g Fermaid O; confirm the amount as described on page 2

Method

1. Prepare. Read both pages before starting. Clean, then sanitise the fermenter, airlock, spoon, siphon, hydrometer and sample jar. Use an 8 L food-grade fermenter to leave room for foam.

2. Mix. Dissolve the honey in about 3.5 L drinking water, then add water up to the 5 L mark. Mix thoroughly. Do not add 5 L water on top of the honey. Aim for 18-21 C. Record the original gravity (OG).

3. Start fermentation. Aerate the must by stirring vigorously before adding yeast. Rehydrate the yeast according to its packet, then add it. Fit an airlock and keep at 18-21 C, away from direct sun. Never seal a fermenting vessel without a gas outlet.

4. Feed and monitor. Use the nutrient schedule on page 2. Gently release dissolved gas before each addition; foaming can be vigorous. After the early nutrient stage, avoid splashing and unnecessary opening.

5. Allow time. Primary fermentation often takes 3-6 weeks, but the hydrometer decides when it has finished. When fermentation has ended, siphon off the heavy sediment into a smaller sanitised vessel with minimal headspace and an airlock. Continue on page 2.

Ferment, finish and bottle

Nutrients: measure before you start

The 4 g Fermaid O amount is a starting estimate for this honey base with low-nitrogen-demand Lalvin 71B. Honey varies: enter your measured OG, 5 L base volume and yeast into the linked TOSNA calculator. For blueberry mead, also include the fruit adjustment. Use its calculated total; other nutrient products cannot be substituted gram for gram.

Divide the calculated total into four equal portions (4 g gives four 1 g doses). Add at 24, 48 and 72 hours after pitching; add the fourth at the one-third sugar break or day 7, whichever comes first. If the break comes early, move outstanding doses forward to it instead of adding them later. Gently degas first, mix nutrient with a little drawn must and add slowly.

One-third sugar break: SG = 1 + (OG - 1) x 2/3. For OG 1.084, the break is about 1.056. Check daily during early fermentation. Use a scale accurate to 0.1 g and the current product directions.

Confirm completion and mature

For these dry recipes, look for a final gravity near or below 1.000, with the same reading on three checks over two weeks at fermentation temperature. A quiet airlock or clear appearance alone does not prove completion. If the reading is higher, the mead is still sweet, or fermentation has stopped unexpectedly, investigate a possible stalled fermentation before bottling.

Let the mead clear and mature under an airlock with minimal headspace, usually a further 2-3 months or longer to taste. Rack carefully if a substantial sediment forms. Times and yield are estimates; these formulations have not yet been test-brewed.

Bottle as a still, dry mead

When fermentation is confirmed complete, siphon gently into sanitised wine bottles and close with suitable wine closures. Add no priming sugar, extra honey or fruit juice. Added fermentable sugar can restart fermentation and create dangerous bottle pressure. For a sweeter glass, add a little honey only at serving and drink it immediately. Store sealed bottles cool and dark.

Historical note and sources

These are modern homebrewing recipes with Nordic inspiration, not recovered Viking-Age formulas. The photographs are AI-generated illustrations, and the spiced version does not establish Viking use of this particular spice combination. Method references checked 20 October 2026:

American Homebrewers Association: making mead

Mead Made Right: nutrient method and calculator

TOSNA calculator

Lallemand: Lalvin 71B technical data

BJCP: fruit and spice methods

Planning notes: OG _____ Nutrient total _____ g Yeast date _____
Final readings / dates _____