



Making Heritage Apple Cider in the New England Style

How to Make Apple Cider - Heritage New England Style

New England ciders are made with characteristically high acid New England apple varieties such as Northern Spy, Roxbury Russet, Golden Russet, and Baldwin. New England ciders are also known for being relatively alcoholic because of different kinds of sugars being added including corn, cane, brown, molasses, honey and even raisins. Alcohol levels are usually between 7 and 13%, making them noticeably stronger than their European counterparts. These sugar additions also contribute flavors to the cider. These ciders are traditionally rather dry, but can be sweeter when balancing higher alcohol levels. They should have some tannin character and should have moderate acidity. Traditionally, these ciders were often aged for some time in oak barrels. The barrels often came from local distilleries when they were done with them. Therefore, many New England ciders will have some spirit character to them in addition to the sugar additions' character. Original brix should be between 14 and 24 Brix. New England ciders do not commonly go through MLF.

To make New England-style ciders, ideally you want to start with New England apple varieties. If you don't have access to those, high acid, moderate tannin apple varieties should work. If using culinary apples or store-bought juice, you will need to add acidity and tannin. Tannin can be added in the form of Stellartan G Grape Tannin. Add just enough to have some astringency. For usage recommendations, refer to our [Key Components in Cider discussion](#). If you are new to testing titratable acidity, a simple starter kit, [Country Acid Wine Test Kit](#), is available to measure the TA of the juice or finished cider. Our staff can help you understand this kit. You probably want a TA between 0.6 and 0.75%. Add enough sugar of your choice to bring the original brix to between 14 and 24 Brix. Choose a yeast that can handle your desired alcohol content. Champagne yeasts can handle high alcohol fermentations but produce no fruity esters on their own. [DV10 champagne yeasts](#) is a great choice for this type of cider--it will produce ciders with no fruity, estery aromas and will allow the natural aromatic of the apple to dominate.

If you can, age stronger ciders in barrels previously used for aging spirits. The Beverage People often gets shipments of [used whiskey barrels](#). Get some friends in on the project and age your cider in one of them for a more authentic character. If barrels are not an option, try soaking staves of oak like [WineStix](#). WineStix are toasted oak that can be soaked in a jar of your favorite spirit until saturated. Then take the stave and add it to the cider until the cider reaches a desirable amount of spirit character.

When it comes to bottling, dry and carbonated is good choice, though backsweetening may be desirable if the cider has higher ABV with noticeable alcohols that need to be hidden behind sweetness. Carbonation can range from still (no carbonation) to high carbonation.

Instructions

1. Crush the apples. Use tannic crab apples if you can. Sort out spoiled fruit.
2. The crushed pulp should be sulfited right away. If your fruit is in good condition, add one [Campden Tablet](#) per gallon of crushed fruit (65 parts per million SO₂).
3. Stir in [Pectinase](#) powder. Use 1/2 ounce for every 5 gallons. Wait 2-4 hours before pressing for the pectinase to break down the pulp which increases the amount of juice that can be extracted. It will also aid in clarifying the cider to achieve a clear, bright cider.
4. Press the pulp to separate the juice from the skins and other solids. Funnel the collected juice into narrow-neck containers that can accept an airlock. Only fill them three-quarters full.
5. Remove a sample of the juice to test for total acidity (TA). Follow the instructions in your acid testing kit. If the acidity is less than .6%, add enough [tartaric acid](#) to bring it to this level. If you cannot do the test right away, refrigerate the juice and run the test later.
6. Now test the sugar content of the juice with your hydrometer. Note this number as you will be adding more sugar soon to bring the sugar level up to 14-28% sugar (14-28° brix).
7. *If your apples are culinary apples rather than New England varieties, add tannin such as StellarTan G Grape tannin to increase the tannin content of the juice. For instructions, refer to our [Key Components in Cider discussion](#).
8. You will now prepare your adjunct sugars to increase the sugar content of the juice. You may choose corn, cane, brown, molasses, honey and even raisins, to bring the sugar level up to 14-28% sugar (14-28° brix). For dry sugars such as corn, cane or brown, you can expect 1 lb of sugar added to 1 gallon of juice to increase brix by about 11 (for example, a juice starting at 10% brix would become about 21% brix juice after the sugars are added). For liquid sugars such as honey or molasses, you can expect 1 lb of sugar added to 1 gallon of juice to increase brix by about 9 (for example, a juice starting at 10% brix would become about 19% brix juice after the sugars are added). Whichever sugar you choose, and whichever amount you add, you will need to sterilize it first by boiling. Make a simple syrup of your chosen sugar adjunct by boiling for at least 2 minutes and cooling. Remember that added water will impact the brix as well. Cool and add to the juice, leaving at least 1/4 of the fermentor space open for foaming during fermentation.
9. Wait a total of 8-12 hours after crushing and adding the Campden Tablets for the sulfite to dissipate. Then add your Yeast by sprinkling on the surface. A good choice of yeast would be [DV10 Champagne Yeast](#). It can handle high levels of alcohol and will produce ciders with no fruity, estery aromas which will allow the natural aromatic of the apple to dominate. Attach an airlock or breather bung, and allow fermentation to proceed. After a day or two of fermentation, sprinkle in 1 tsp. of [Yeast Food](#) per 5 gallons. Agitate to disperse. If you can, maintain fermentation temperatures that are on the lower end of the temperature range for the yeast you are

using. For example, if the fermentation temperature range of the yeast is 60° - 75°F, using fermentation temperatures around 60° - 62°F will ensure that less aromatics are driven off with the CO2 production.

10. When visible signs of fermentation end - the foam flattens and the hazy appearance begins to clarify - the cider must be removed from the sediment. Use a siphon to transfer the cider to a sanitized glass, PET plastic or stainless steel storage containers that accept an airlock. Fill your container all the way into the narrow part of the neck without touching the stopper. Close the top with a stopper and airlock.

11. During the racking at the end of fermentation, add 1/2 **Campden Tablet** per gallon (32 parts per million SO2).

12. Store for two or three months. Traditionally, these ciders were often aged for some time in oak barrels. The Beverage People often gets shipments of **used whiskey barrels**. Get some friends in on the project and age your cider in one of them for a more authentic character. If barrels are not an option, try soaking staves of oak like **WineStix**. WineStix are toasted oak that can be soaked in a jar of your favorite spirit until saturated. Then take the stave and add it to the cider until the cider reaches a desirable amount of spirit character.

13. After a minimum of two months, carefully rack away from the sediment. If your cider is going into extended bottle storage, add another half **Campden Tablet** per gallon (32 parts per million SO2). Beverages such as this may often be enjoyed within two months of bottling. If you plan to drink some that soon, don't add additional sulfite to that portion at bottling time.

14. Siphon into bottles, cork or cap them, and set them aside for whatever bottle aging is needed. You may make a sparkling cider by adding 5-8 oz. of sugar to 5 gallons of cider and bottling in crown-cappable beer or up to 10 oz in strong champagne bottles. Store at room temperature for at least 2 weeks before refrigerating and opening a bottle. This will allow time for the yeast to consume the added sugar and carbonate the cider. If not fully carbonated after 2 weeks, wait a week and test again. Note: Do not use Potassium Sorbate if making sparkling cider or it won't sparkle! If you can taste alcohol in your cider and you wish to sweeten, add to taste. A syrup can be made by boiling two parts sugar with one part water, and add 1/2 tsp. **Potassium Sorbate** per gallon to prevent re-fermentation in the bottles. To carbonate sweetened cider, you will need to **force carbonate in a keg system**.