

Secret last-minute addition article. Enjoy!

Mushroom Mead

This is a very festive recipe for the holidays, too good to pass up for this issue! Hope you like it

I have made 2 batches (1 gallon each) of *P. cubensis* beer and 1 gallon of shroom mead (honey based wine) and what a beautiful light blue color it was.

Basically after your beer has almost stopped fermenting and the alcohol concentration (and specific gravity) has risen high enough for contamination of beer to not be a problem, say above 4% alcohol (beer) and at least 8% alcohol (mead) you can then add a specified amount of fresh shrooms and continue to let it ferment or sit for no less than 10 days. That gives it plenty of time for the active compounds of the mushrooms to leach out into your beer/mead.

When bottling your brew you can scoop out the old fruiting bodies or filter them out. Fresh shrooms makes it easier to filter out than dried or flaked material. And wow, no bad taste at all and you get a mega buzz.

Depending on what size bottles you will be bottling your beer in, you can calculate how much shrooms you should put in. Say you have 12 oz bottles and only want to drink 1 beer to feel the effect (I wouldn't want to be a drunken tripper now). Figure out how many bottles to the gallon and make 1 beer equal to 1 dose (say 7g for me). Well, you get the picture. If you have 6 doses of shrooms, split them up into a batch of beer that will fill 6 bottles, etc.

I have kept this beer potion up to 1 month and I know it stays potent until then. If you keep it longer than that, you might want to stir it up when drinking in case anything settles on the bottom of bottle. The mead was by far the best tasting, it was a cherry-lime mead and the fruit really masked the fungal flavor well. I encourage all you home brewers to think about this and try it if you ever have any fresh material.

Recipe for Apple-Cinnamon Mead (2 gallons)

- 6 pounds of honey (get some without any preservatives)
- 6 cups of apple juice
- juice from 10 granny smith (gives tart) and 8 or so of your favorite variety of apples (I like Gayla) with pulp from a juice extractor)
- 1 tsp citric acid
- 2 tsp yeast nutrient (I used brewer's yeast from a health food store)
- 1/4 tsp Irish Moss (can get at a brew store or catalog)
- 3 sticks of cinnamon

Boil honey and 2 gallons of water for 15 minutes. Everything should be boiled except for the apple juice/pulp. While it is boiling, you can skim the light layer of crud that forms on top of the honey, and discard.

Let the "wort" cool until it is around 170 degrees F, and add the apple juice/pulp. Try to maintain a temperature of 155-165 degrees F. for at least

20 minutes to pasteurize the apples (if it is too hot, it will set the pectin in the fruit, and the mead will have a haze problem).

Cool the mixture with a wort chiller or let it stand until it is less than 85 deg F, and pitch (add) the yeast (I recommend Wyeast Sweet Mead or Red Star Champagne Dry yeast). Let it ferment with a blow-by or airlock for a week until primary fermentation is complete and the fruit has settled to the bottom. Siphon into a secondary fermenter leaving the fruit and cinnamon sticks behind. Alternately, if you want more cinnamon aroma, you can pasteurize (in 170 degree water) some more cinnamon sticks and add them at this time. My original batch had no detectable cinnamon in it as the aroma was scrubbed away during primary fermentation.

Ferment until clear (can take up to 3 months, now that's quicker than most wines!), and bottle with 4 2/3 tsp corn sugar if you desire a sparklin' mead.

Optional:

After fermentating and before bottling and if alcohol content is high (at least 8-9%) you can add mushroom fruiting bodies to your brew and let them sit for no less than 10 days in your carboy. 'Active' compounds will leach into your brew. While bottling you can just leave the fruiting old bodies behind, don't bottle them!

You can vary this recipe with regards to fruit. Apples have a lot of sugar, so if you want to use something else, you may need to add more honey. See any of the homebrewing books by Charlie Papazian (e.g. The New Complete Joy of Homebrewing) for more variation.

Meads are typically more alcoholic than grape wines, ranging anywhere from 9 - 16 % alcohol. This stuff is good but has a kick!

Drink up and freak out! My kinda evening.

-Kelly i.