



Traditional New England Farmhouse Cider



Traditional New England farmhouse cider is a celebration of the wonderful heritage of apple cultivation that stretches back to the original colonists. Unlike most modern commercial examples that are sweetened to sometimes sickly proportions, New England farmhouse cider ferments to complete dryness, and that absence of sugar emphasizes the apples natural crispness and lovely bouquet. Because of its crispness, this traditional style of cider shares similarities with a dry white wine. Although farmhouse cider may be consumed in as little as two months after fermentation begins, like a fine wine, this cider will continue to improve for at least two years and beyond.

Just the Facts, Ma'am:

BJCP Style: 40A. New England Cider

Original Specific Gravity: 1.060 - 1.070

Final Specific Gravity: 0.994 - 1.002

Alcohol by Volume: 7.5 - 9.5%

Time to Awesome Drinkability: 2 Months Minimum! (This cider continues to improve for at least two years! Don't believe it? Keep some and find out!)

Ingredients:

5½ Gallons Cider (Final Recipe Volume is 5 Gallons. See Instructions Below)

Sugar (See Below)

Yeast (See Below)

Optional Cider Ingredients:

5 oz Priming Sugar (for bottle carbonation)

K.C. Finings (helps to clear cider in preparation for bottling)

Sugar:

Unlike grapes, apples tend to be relatively low in sugar. Therefore, it is traditional when making New England farmhouse cider to add a certain amount of sugar to help raise the final alcohol level over 7%. With alcohol levels above about 7%, cider will have the potential to age gracefully for many years. Remember, adding sugar does not sweeten the final cider. All sugar is fermented by the yeast to produce alcohol, and after fermentation is over, no sugar will remain. The time-honored method is to add about one rounded cup of sugar for each gallon of cider. It is not beneficial to add too much sugar, because that will result in a cider that is too high in alcohol, which will make it taste unbalanced. Many different types of sugar and sugar combinations work well in cider. Listed below are three different sugar combinations. Each combination is proper amount to be added to the 5½ gallons of cider. Other combinations work, so feel free to experiment!

Sugar Combinations:

6 cups white table sugar

or

3 cups white table sugar and 3 cups of brown or raw sugar

or

3 lbs honey (honey does not add sweetness but adds a lovely, floral bouquet)

Yeast:

There is no right or wrong when choosing a yeast strain for fermenting cider. All yeast strains listed below are appropriate for the style, and each will leave it's own subtle trademark flavor. Beginner cider makers usually find using dried yeast to be the easiest option. Feel free to experiment and try different strains.

Yeast Options:

Mangrove Jack's™ M02 Cider Yeast

Cider House Select™ Cider Yeast

SafCider™ TF-6 Cider Yeast

SafCider™ AS-2 Cider Yeast

SafCider™ AC-4 Cider Yeast

SafCider™ AB-1 Cider Yeast

OR

Red Star™ Pasteur Champagne Yeast

Cider Day Checklist:

On the cider-making day, you will require the following equipment:

- Primary Fermenter - A 6½ gallon (or greater) food-grade plastic bucket with lid, or a 6½ glass carboy.
- Airlock
- Cleaning / Sanitizing Solution
- Stopper (if using a carboy)
- Long-handled spoon for mixing in the sugar Funnel (if using a carboy)
- Hydrometer (Optional, if you want to measure your specific gravity)

On the day you rack the cider into the secondary fermenter, you will require the following equipment:

- 5 gallon carboy
- Airlock
- Stopper
- Siphon Setup

The Magical Procedure:

Liquid Yeast Activation Before Brewing:

If you are fermenting with liquid yeast, you must activate the yeast packet before it is ready to pitch. Always check the manufacturing date stamped on the yeast packet. Yeast that is less than 1 month old may be activated on brew day. A yeast that is more than 2 months old may require additional preparation time. Always make sure your yeast has been properly activated before using. Please see www.boomchugalug.com/wyeast.htm for complete liquid yeast activation instructions.

Time to Ferment Some Cider! (Better pour yourself a glass too. Don't want to be empty-handed!)

Cider pressed fresh from the orchard is the ideal choice. If fresh-pressed cider is not available, pasteurized cider also works, but the fresh apple flavor will not be as intense. However, it is critical that the cider be free of preservatives such as sorbate or benzoate. This recipe begins with 5½ gallons of cider to yield a final volume of 5 gallons. Remember to properly clean and sanitize all of your cider making equipment before beginning.

1. Allow the cider to warm to room temperature (65°F - 75°F).
2. Pour the cider into the fermenter. Add your chosen sugar combination. Stir

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Flip the sheet to continue the magic. Also, this is a good time to pour a cold one! Unless you're afraid! →





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until dissolved.

Note: If you would like to measure the specific gravity, now is a good time to take a reading. To get an accurate reading, it is important to make sure all of the sugar you added to the fermenter has been completely dissolved. This might take a lot of stirring.

Add the Yeast!

1. With your cider temperature between 65°F - 75°F, aerate the cider before adding the yeast. Simply close the fermenter and swirl around to mix in air. If you are swirling a carboy, it is helpful to place the carboy on a thick, folded blanket to avoid damaging the vessel. Yeast likes oxygen at the very beginning of fermentation. Never aerate your cider except at this beginning step.
2. Immediately after aerating, add the yeast. If you are using liquid yeast, simply cut open the pack and pour in. If you are using dried yeast, sprinkle the yeast over the top of the cider. Try to avoid clumping if possible. You will want to stir the floating yeast into the cider, but do not stir. The dried yeast prefers to slowly rehydrate by floating in the cider before fermenting.
3. Close the fermenter, attach the airlock, and keep the fermenter between 65° - 75°F until you see fermentation beginning, such as the airlock bubbling once every 30 seconds.
4. Allow to cider to ferment between 63°F - 75°F. If you let the temperature drop below about 60°F, it is possible that the yeast may stop before all of the fermentation is complete. If this happens, simply place the fermenter in a warmer location and let the temperature rise again to 63°F - 75°F. The yeast will wake up again and get back to work!

Secondary Fermentation:

After about 2 weeks in the primary fermenter, the yeast will begin to run out of fermentable sugar, and the fermentation rate (bubbling) will begin to slow. This is a good time to transfer the cider to a 5 gallon glass carboy.

1. Siphon the cider into a 5 gallon glass carboy and allow fermentation to complete within the proper temperature range. It is not unusual to see active bubbling through the airlock for another few weeks. When aging cider in the 5 gallon glass carboy, it's best to keep the carboy as full as possible. The reason is to minimize the airspace in the carboy. Too much air in the carboy during aging can somewhat diminish the fresh flavor of the cider. The rule of thumb is to keep the liquid level about one inch below the rubber stopper. This tiny amount of airspace will help keep the cider fresh. If you ever wind up with too much airspace, it is best to top off the carboy with a commercially made hard cider. Just pour in a bottle or two until you have the liquid level about one inch below the rubber stopper.

Note: The alcohol fermentation (when the yeast eats sugar to produce alcohol) is relatively fast and usually finishes within a few weeks. If a slow fermentation continues (the airlock consistently bubbles once a minute or slower) for a longer period of time, then the cider is undergoing malolactic fermentation. Malolactic fermentation is a beneficial secondary fermentation whereby a benevolent malolactic bacteria ferments harsh malic acid into a softer, more pleasant lactic acid. This makes your cider better! If you notice a malolactic fermentation taking place, it is important to let the fermentation progress to completion. Unfortunately, this may take a few months. Never bottle cider while a malolactic fermentation is occurring, because your bottles could explode. If you are not willing to wait and want to stop all malolactic fermentation, simply add one crushed Campden tablet per gallon of cider. This will stop all malolactic activity.

2. After all fermentation is complete (no airlock activity), you may place the carboy in a cooler location, such as a cellar, for aging and clearing. Allow to rest for at least 1 month or longer until the cider clears. A clear cider will resemble a white wine.

Optional Step: If the cider has not cleared within one month, you may give it more

time to clear. If the cider is very slow to clear, which sometimes happens, then you may add finings to help clearing process. Siphon the cider into a clean carboy and add the K.C. Finings. Follow the package instructions.

3. When the cider has cleared, you are ready to bottle. If you want to use the hydrometer to determine the alcohol content, now is a good time to take the final reading.

Time to Bottle!

Before bottling, always make sure there is absolutely no fermentation activity (bubbling) taking place in the cider. If you attempt to bottle while the cider is still fermenting, you can expect bottles to explode.

Optional Step: If you want to produce a sparkling cider, you will need to add priming sugar before bottling. Follow Steps 1 through 4. If you are making a still cider (not carbonated), then do not add the corn sugar as described in Steps 2 and 3.

1. Before bottling, sanitize your bottling bucket, auto siphon (or racking cane), hose, bottle filler, caps and bottles.
2. Dissolve 5 ounces (by weight) or 3/4 cup of corn sugar in 16 oz of water. Boil for 5 minutes. Corn sugar is sometimes called dextrose or priming sugar.
3. Place your fermenter on the counter and your bottling bucket on the floor. Pour the sugar solution into the bottling bucket, and siphon the cider from the fermenter into the bottling bucket. Siphon carefully, trying to minimize splashing and aeration of the cider. Also when siphoning, be sure to leave behind the sediment at the bottom of the fermenter. There's no problem if you siphon up a little sediment. When you're done siphoning, gently stir the cider in the bottling bucket to make sure all of the sugar solution has been dissolved. Your racking cane makes a convenient stirring wand.
4. Place your bottling bucket on the counter, and attach your siphon hose and bottle filler to the bucket's spigot. Fill the bottles to about 1 inch from the top, and cap each bottle.

Carbonation and Maturation!

Now that your bottles are capped, it is time to begin the phase known as bottle maturation. During this time, the flavors will transition from a youthful harshness to a fully mature, lively and complex hard cider. If you primed the cider for bottle carbonation, the remaining yeast will undergo a second fermentation in the bottle. The yeast will eat the priming sugar and produce carbon dioxide, which is trapped in the bottle to produce the carbonation. While your cider is carbonating, it will also be maturing - the young, rough undeveloped flavors develop into your magical beverage!

1. If you primed your cider for bottle carbonation, then place your bottles in a dark place at room temperature (62 °F - 75 °F), and wait at least two weeks for the cider to carbonate. It is important that you keep the cider between 62 °F - 75 °F for carbonation to develop. If the cider cools below 62 °F, it may not properly carbonate. Sometimes cider may take upwards of two months to completely carbonate.
2. Once your cider is carbonated, you may store it in a cool place. This is also true for uncarbonated cider. Keep in mind that home-made cider is unfiltered, and unfiltered ciders actually continue to improve with time. If your cider seems rough-around-the edges or tastes yeasty, these qualities will morph into a smooth, clean cider over time.
3. **Serving tip:** When pouring the cider into your glass, be sure to pour slowly to leave behind the bottle's sediment. Naturally made, unfiltered cider will always drop a thin layer of sediment at the bottom of the bottle. If you pour the yeast sediment into your glass, you'll make the cider cloudy and taste yeasty.
4. Always remember, traditional New England farmhouse cider is a naturally made, unsweetened cider that will be quite crisp and dry (no sweetness). When young, the cider can seem tart and unrefined. This is definitely a sign that the cider is too young. With proper aging, the tartness will mellow into a pleasing crispness, like a dry white wine, and the youthful, unrefined flavor will open up to release the pleasant flavor and aromas of fresh apples! Cheers!

