

Hard (Alcoholic) Apple Cider

A recipe originally from Michael Lineage & evolved by Peter Avery.

1. Collect 20 litres of fresh (unpasteurised) apple juice into a fermenter of suitable size.
2. Immediately add:
 - a. Sulphur in the form of potassium metabisulphite at 80 ppm (parts per million) which is 1/2 teaspoon dissolved in a small amount of water. This is to kill off any wild yeast and bacteria.
 - b. 20 gms of pectinase, a pectin enzyme. This is to break down pectin, which allows more juice to be released from the fruit's fiber and furthermore, clarifies the juice.
3. Mix well, seal the fermenter and leave in a cool dark place for 24 hours.
4. After 24 hours carefully rack (siphon) off the juice into another fermenter, being careful not to disturb the pectin sediment that has settled to the bottom of the fermenter.
5. To the racked juice, add:
 - a. 4 tsp of Fermaid 'K', a yeast nutrient, and mix in well.
 - b. 10 gms of yeast, hydrated in a cup of water at 30°C. Champagne yeast EC-1118 works well.
6. Seal the fermenter and add an airlock so carbon dioxide generated by the ferment can be expelled without risking the ingress of oxygen (we don't want it to oxidise and turn brown!) & bacteria (we don't want it to go off!).
7. Leave in a cool (18-22°C) dark place for 2-3 weeks and allow it to ferment to dryness e.g. when carbon dioxide stops bubbling through the airlock.
8. Clean and sterilise 55 x 375 ml bottles (~20 ltr / 375 ml = ~55 bottles). Milton works well.
9. Once again rack off the juice into another fermenter, being careful not to disturb the yeast sediment.
10. To the racked juice, add:
 - a. 250 gms of lactose sugar (or other non-fermentable sugar) to sweeten the cider.
 - b. 180 gms of sugar to feed the yeast during the second ferment (for bubbles!) and mix well.
11. To each bottle:
 - a. Add a tiny pinch of yeast nutrient
 - b. Fill with juice, leaving a couple centimeters at the top
 - c. Cap the bottle
12. Leave in a cool (18-22°C) dark place for at least 2-4 weeks (ideally up to 3 months).