



TAUNTON WINEMAKERS CIRCLE

HOW TO START WINEMAKING AND NINE SIMPLE RECIPES

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Recommendations and simple recipes for new winemakers

Winemaking can be as simple or as complicated as you wish to make it. This leaflet is intended to be an introduction for new or lapsed winemakers

You can enhance your knowledge by joining your local winemakers circle or referring to books and online resources.

Basic Equipment: the following is necessary to start winemaking.

1. A plastic bucket, preferably white, 2 gallon, 10l capacity.
2. 1 or 2 one-gallon jars (demi johns) with bored rubber bungs and airlocks
3. Plastic funnels, one small and one large
4. Muslin straining bag
5. Syphon tubing
6. Hydrometer. This measures the sugar content of the solutions and therefore allows you to calculate the alcohol percentage.

Cleanliness: All equipment must be clean and sterilized. Milton Baby steriliser is fine or you can buy dedicated wine making sterilization powders.

Temperature: When fermenting, a temperature of around 21° is perfect. If it too much warmer then it will ferment too fast. If its cooler then it will not ferment correctly. Airing cupboards are generally too warm - the ambient temperature in a normal centrally-heated house is sufficient.

Racking Off. This is referred to frequently. It is the process of syphoning the wine from the lees (the sludge at the bottom of the demijohn) into a clean demijohn. When doing so, add one crushed Campden tablet per gallon. Do this frequently to avoid the wine becoming tainted from the dead yeast in the lees.

Hydrometer and Specific Gravity (SG). A hydrometer measures the amount of sugar in your wine. A measurement of 1.000 means no sugar at all, the same as plain water. We normally want our wine to start fermentation with a level of around 1.080, though this can be varied a lot. When making your wine, measure

the SG and then add sugar to bring the SG up the desired levels. There are online calculators to tell you how much sugar to add.

Topping up. It is important to keep demijohns topped up to the neck to exclude as much air as possible. You can do this by adding cooled water, sweetened with sugar as you wish. You can also use grape juice.

Sweetening. It is easier to ferment a wine to dry then stop the fermentation and then sweeten to taste when fermentation is complete. If you add too much sugar too early, you risk a “stuck” fermentation which is often difficult to restart. Remember, a dry wine can be made sweet, but a sweet wine cannot be made dry. NB. non-fermentable sweeteners can be purchased.

Competitions: These are an enjoyable aspect of wine making. Review the schedule of classes and decide which classes you wish to enter. By sweetening individual bottles, you can get a dry wine, medium wine and sweet wine from one demijohn. You can also blend wines to get the best overall taste. If you join your local wine making group or join online forums, you will learn a lot and will get helpful guidance on how best to prepare wines for competition.

There are nine recipes in this booklet. These can be used to make wine to fit the majority of the classes in the wine competition schedule.

Remember: you only need one bottle for a class. So make a whole demijohn then sweeten or blend individual bottles to fit the classes. With care and blending, you can get six bottles out of one demijohn that potentially could be entered into six different classes.

Recipes

1. Tropical fruit – white table wine.

This is a very easy and straightforward wine to make. It can be made and drunk within a few weeks.

Supermarket fruit juice, NOT from concentrate. 2 litres, Any flavours to suit your taste.

Sugar	700g
Pectic enzyme	5g
Tartaric Acid	5g
Tannin	2.5g
Bentonite	5g
Yeast Nutrient	5g
Wine Yeast	5g or 1 sachet

Dissolve the sugar in 1 litre of hot water. Add the fruit juice. When it has cooled to approx. 21° add the acid, tannin, pectic enzyme, nutrient, bentonite and yeast. Pour all into a demijohn and top up to the shoulder with cooled water.

When the initial vigorous fermentation has eased (3 or 4 days), top up to the neck with a water and sugar solution. After around two weeks, fermentation will have almost ceased. Rack off into a clean demijohn, add one crushed Campden tablet and leave to clear in a cooler environment. You can add finings to aid this process. Once clear, bottle and enjoy. As with all wines, you can add sugar to sweeten it as you bottle the wine if you need to.

2. Elderberry (and blackberry) table wine.

Elderberry wine is referred to as the “King of homemade wines” as it can produce a rich, deep red wine. This is best made with elderberries picked from your local hedgerow, but dried elderberries can be used.

Elderberries, ripe*	1350g
Sugar	900g
Red grape juice	1 litre
Yeast Nutrient	5g

Tartaric acid*	5g
Pectic Enzyme	5g
Camden tablet	1
Wine Yeast	5g or 1 sachet

* You can replace some of the elderberries with blackberries to your choice. If you do, reduce the tartaric acid proportionately as blackberries have sufficient acid.

Remove the elderberries from the stalks. This is easiest by freezing the elderberry heads first in a carrier bag. Then massage the frozen fruit through the bag. You will find that the berries break away from the stalks very easily. Put the berries into a bucket, add sugar, pectic enzyme, grape juice, acid, one crushed Campden tablet, nutrient and 3 litres of water. Cover and leave for 24 hours. Add the yeast. Leave for three days (no longer), stirring daily. Strain off into a demijohn. Top up to the shoulder with cooled water. Fit airlock and allow to ferment. Once the initial vigour has settled, top up to the neck. Leave for 4 weeks until all fermentation has ceased. Rack off, add a Campden tablet and leave for a further 8 weeks. Rack again and leave for 6 months or more in a cooler environment. Bottle and enjoy.

If the competition calls for a sweeter wine, then add some sugar as you bottle it.

3. Elderflower Wine

The taste of summer, perhaps one of the most popular wines. Pick the elderflowers with care and choose only those from sweet smelling bushes. It is important to pick flowers on that are fully open on a sunny day. Freeze the heads in a carrier bag. Once frozen, massage the carrier bag so that the tiny white blooms break off from the green stalks. Use just the white blooms.

Elderflower blooms (no stalks)	500ml
Sugar	1kg
Tartaric acid	5g
Yeast Nutrient	5g
Pectic Enzyme	5g

Camden tablet	1
Wine Yeast	5g or 1 sachet

Put the flowers into a bucket and cover with a litre of boiling water to kill the natural yeasts and bacteria. Dissolve the sugar in about 2 litres of cool water and add to the bucket with all the ingredients apart from the yeast. When the liquid has cooled to approx. 21° add the yeast. Cover the bucket and leave for 3 or 4 days, stirring daily. Strain the liquid into a demijohn. Fit airlock and allow to ferment. Once the initial vigour has settled, top up to the neck. Leave for 4 weeks until all fermentation has ceased. Rack off, add a Campden tablet and leave for a further 6 weeks or so to mature and clear. You can add finings to aid this process. Once clear, bottle and enjoy. As with all wines, you can add sugar to sweeten it as you bottle the wine if you need to.

4. Apricot Wine, Medium sweet.

A wine that can be made at any time of year using basic supermarket ingredients. Produces a clear medium sweet wine.

Dried or tinned apricots	640g
Sultanas	320g
Sugar	700g
Pectic enzyme	5g
Yeast nutrient	5g
Wine Yeast	5g or 1 sachet

Wash the dried fruit. Put the fruit and sugar into a bucket and pour over 1.5litres of hot water. If using tinned apricots, you can pour the entire tin contents including the juice into the bucket. Add all the other ingredients apart from the yeast. When the liquid has cooled to approx. 21° add the yeast. Cover the bucket and leave for 3 or 4 days, stirring daily. Strain the liquid into a demijohn. Fit airlock and allow to ferment. Once the initial vigour has settled, top up to the neck. Leave for 4 weeks until all fermentation has ceased. Rack off, add a

Campden tablet and leave for a further 6 weeks or so to mature and clear. You can add finings to aid this process. Once clear, bottle and enjoy. As with all wines, you can add sugar to sweeten it as you bottle the wine if you need to.

5. Parsnip Wine

A traditional country wine with a distinctive and earthy taste. Very popular and easy to make.

Parsnips	1.5kg
Sugar	1.1kg
Citric acid	10g
Pectic Enzyme	5g
Yeast Nutrient	5g
Tannin	5g
Wine Yeast	5g or one sachet

Simmer the washed and sliced parsnips for 15 minutes in sufficient unsalted water to cover them. Be careful not to overboil them or you risk too much starch and the wine turning into a sticky goo. Strain the liquid into a plastic bucket, cover and leave to cool. Dissolve the sugar in warm water and add to bucket with remaining ingredients apart from the yeast. Add enough cooled water to bring to around 4.5 litres in total.

When the liquid has cooled to approx. 21° pour into a demijohn. Add the yeast. Fit airlock and allow to ferment. Once the initial vigour has settled, top up to the neck. Leave for 4 weeks until all fermentation has ceased. Rack off, add a Campden tablet and leave for a further 6 weeks or so to mature and clear. You can add finings to aid this process. Once clear, bottle and enjoy. As with all wines, you can add sugar to sweeten it as you bottle the wine if you need to.

6. Gooseberry and Apricot Wine

680g tin of gooseberries in syrup or 500g fresh or frozen.

225g tinned or fresh apricots.

Bananas	450g
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Citric acid	5g
Yeast nutrient	5g
Pectic enzyme	5g
Tannin	3g
Sugar	1kg

Place gooseberries into bucket and crush them with a masher. Stone the apricots and crush them, add to the gooseberries. Peel the bananas, cut into small pieces and simmer with a litre of water for 20mins, then pour water and fruit into the bucket. Stir in the sugar and leave to cool to approx. 21°. Add the remaining ingredients and enough cool water to bring it up to around 4.5l. Cover and stir daily for 4 days. Strain through muslin into a demijohn. Fit an airlock and allow to ferment as described in previous recipes.

Rack off, add a Campden tablet and leave for a further 6 weeks or so to mature and clear. You can add finings to aid this process. Once clear, bottle and enjoy. As with all wines, you can add sugar to sweeten it as you bottle the wine if you need to.

7. Rhubarb Wine

Rhubarb stalks	1.5kg
White grape juice or apple juice	1 litre
Sugar	750g
Tartaric acid	5g
Pectic enzyme	5g
Yeast nutrient	5g
Wine Yeast	5g or one sachet.

Cut the rhubarb into chunks and place in bucket. Pour over the dry sugar, ensuring that the fruit is covered. Cover and leave to 48 hours. The sugar will dissolve and form a thick rhubarb flavoured syrup. Add one litre of cooled water to “wash” the fruit and pour all of the liquid into a demijohn. Add the apple juice. Top up to the shoulder with cool water. Add remaining ingredients and allow to ferment as previously described, topping up to the neck with sugared

water when the initial vigour has subsided. When fully fermented, rack and add a Campden tablet. Allow to clear, using finings as necessary.

8. Red Dessert Wine

Blackberries	500g
Elderberries	1kg
Plums	1kg
Bananas – very ripe	1kg
Red grape juice	2 litres
Sugar	1kg
Pectic enzyme	5g
Yeast nutrient	5g
Oak Granules	15g
Glycerine	10ml
Wine Yeast – high alcohol	1 sachet
Boiled water	
Sugar to sweeten	450g

Put fruit into bucket and crush. Add a teaspoon of bicarbonate soda to reduce acidity and pour on 2 litres of boiling water. When cool, add grape juice, pectic enzyme, oak granules and yeast nutrient. Leave for 24 hours, add yeast and leave in a covered bucket for 3 to 4 days, stirring daily. Strain into a demijohn and top up to shoulder level. Fit air lock and leave to ferment. Rack off after 3 to 4 weeks. If the wine has reduced to around 1.000 to 1.010 SG, then you can feed the wine with extra sugar, 100g at a time to continue the fermentation and increase the alcohol in the finished wine. When fermentation stops, add the sweetening sugar to give an SG of around 1.030 and glycerine to the wine. Add a Campden tablet to ensure that the additional sugar doesn't allow the fermentation to restart. The wine should be left for a minimum of 6 months and will be a full-bodied, rich dessert wine.

9. Tea Infusion Wine

A very simple wine that can be made at any time of the year. Is quick to mature and with the distinctive flavours of fruit teabags, can make some unusual and attractive wines.

20 fruit teabags

Sugar between 750g and 1kg

Tartaric acid 1 tsp

Pectolase 1 tsp

Juice of one lemon

Yeast and yeast nutrient

Put all 20 teabags into pan, add 2.5 litres boiling water, cover, remove from heat and allow to infuse for 24 hrs.

Remove teabags and rack into demijohn. Add tartaric acid, pectolase and juice of one lemon.

Use cool water to make up to around 4l. Test SG and add sugar to make up to around 1.090. This will be between 750g and 1kg.

Check temperature is around 21C and add yeast and yeast nutrient.

Airlock and ferment in usual manner.

Once initial vigour of fermentation has subsided (4 or 5 days) top up demijohn to the neck with cool water and some sugar.

When all signs of fermentation have stopped, rack in the usual manner.