

Pomegranate Wine

I would lead thee, and bring thee into my mother's house, who would instruct me: I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate.

Song of Solomon 8:2



While we might suspect that there is a bit more to this woman's invitation than having her man over for a tippie, this biblical passage does show that pomegranate was once commonly used to make wine. In the early 21st century nutritionists and pomegranate growers have touted the fruit juice as an elixir that improves heart health, lowers hypertension, eases the difficulties of menopause, and fights breast and prostate cancer.

1.5 quarts pomegranate juice
2.5 quarts white grape juice
1.5 cups sugar
1 teaspoon yeast nutrient
6 teaspoon corn sugar
2 packets Pasteur Red yeast

1. Pour juices, sugar, and yeast nutrient into a glass jug or carboy and swirl till mixed.
Note: If you will be making a sparkling wine, put the rest of the white grape juice in the refrigerator.
2. Pour one packet of yeast on top of the juice and attach the fermentation lock.
3. Wait until all fermentation has stopped and the wine clears, this could take three or four weeks. Degass, bottle and age a month if you want a still wine.
4. If you are making a sparkling wine, do the following:
 - a. Two days before bottling, remove the white grape juice from the refrigerator and pour in the other packet of yeast. Screw the cap on very loosely so the carbon dioxide can escape and leave outside the refrigerator.
 - b. When bottling, siphon the still wine into quart bottles and add 1.5 teaspoons of corn sugar and one teaspoon of fermenting white grape juice to each. Seal each bottle and store upright in a cool place for six weeks before opening.

Blackberry Melomel



Blackberries have traditionally been prescribed for digestive problems: sore throats, hemorrhoids, and all parts in-between. The berries are loaded with antioxidants and nutrients such as vitamins C and E, folate, potassium, manganese, and other good stuff.

These berries grow wild in northern California and it's fairly easy to gather a few pounds. If you can't collect enough in one picking to warrant a batch of wine, freeze them until you can. Or buy them frozen. Frozen berries are just as good as fresh ones when used to make this melomel.

2.5 pounds clover honey
2 pounds blackberries
3 quarts water
½ teaspoon pectin enzyme
1 teaspoon yeast nutrient
½ teaspoon Bentonite
1 Campden tablet
1 packet Pasteur Red yeast

1. Heat the water and slowly stir in the honey and yeast nutrient. Note that honey is heavier than water and will sink to the bottom and scorch if you don't mix it well. Simmer, do not boil, the liquid. If white foam rises to the top; skim it off and discard. If you see brown foam, turn down the heat.
2. Turn off the heat when the honey is thoroughly mixed with the water.
3. Put fruit into a hop bag, place it in the sanitized primary fermenter, and squish it with your hands.
4. Pour the hot liquid onto the bag of fruit in the primary fermenter. Since blackberries have pectin in them, you don't want to boil them in the liquid.
5. When the liquid has cooled to room temperature, add pectin enzyme and yeast.
6. Cover and let ferment for a week.
7. After a week of fermenting, remove the bag of fruit and rack the liquid to a carboy. The remaining solids in the beverage will eventually sink.
8. Wait until all fermentation has stopped, this could take a month to six weeks.
9. When fermentation has stopped, add a crushed Campden tablet.
10. To expedite the clearing process: boil a cup of water and thoroughly mix in 1/2 teaspoon of Bentonite. Then pour this mixture into the carboy, attach the airlock and swish the fermenter around to mix the fining agent into the liquid.
11. When clear, bottle and age two months.

Ginger Ale



Although we normally think of ginger ale as a soft drink, it was originally an alcoholic beverage consumed as both a refreshment and tonic. Ginger is an extremely healthful herb. It causes the heart to beat more strongly and slowly and can help reduce migraines. It removes cholesterol, it's an antiviral, anti-inflammatory, antibiotic, and alleviates nausea.

- 1 gallon water
- 2 ounces ginger root, peeled and sliced
- 1 pound malt syrup (unhopped)
- 6 teaspoons corn sugar
- .5 jalapeño, sliced (optional)
- 2 lemons, juiced
- 1 packet ale yeast

Note: The jalapeño gives the beer zing.

1. Put the sliced ginger and pepper in a hop bag and simmer in two quarts of water for half an hour.
2. Remove the bag.
3. Pour in the malt syrup and when it's fully mixed, and add the lemon juice to the hot liquid.
4. Add two quarts of water, let cool to room temperature, and add yeast.
5. Attach an airlock and wait until fermentation has stopped, usually after a week.
6. Add 1.5 teaspoons of corn sugar to each quart and bottle in Champagne-style bottles, beer bottles, or soda bottles.

Serving Suggestion: Ginger ale, served cold in a pint glass, makes a refreshing summer drink and pairs extremely well with Asian food.