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Brewing Instructions – Chokecherry Wine

- 1) Clean and sanitize your fermenting bucket, airlock, funnel, straining bag, and stopper.
- 2) Put straining bag in the fermenter, add crushed fruit and tie off bag.
- 3) Add all ingredients (except yeast), topping up water to 5 gallons. Stir well to make sure everything is dissolved. Cover fermenter with a fine mesh cloth to allow the Sulfites to be released.
 - 3a) If you do not wish to add Sulfites, you may instead carefully heat the crushed berries to 160 °F for 10 minutes to pasteurize. This may destroy some of the fruit flavor and aroma.
- 4) Take a specific gravity reading with your hydrometer by floating it in a sample from the juice (now called “must”). Record this gravity reading, called the Original Gravity or Starting Gravity.
- 5) After 24 hours, sprinkle the yeast into the must (this is called pitching) and replace the stopper and airlock. Add water to the airlock about half full and cap. Leave to ferment at room temperature (~60-75 degrees) out of direct sunlight.
- 6) Fermentation will begin within 24 hours which will be indicated by bubbling in the airlock. Active fermentation will occur over the next 4-7 days. You will notice quite a bit of bubbling in the airlock during this time. Bubbling in the airlock will subside and eventually stop as fermentation completes.
- 7) After 5-7 days of fermentation, remove the bag of chokecherries. Press and strain juice from the pulp and discard pulp. Top up with fresh water to reach 5 gallons. Transfer must to a secondary fermenter if clarity is desired.
- 8) Take a gravity reading after a week, and check again every 4-5 days. When the gravity reads 1.010 to 1.000, add 1 Campden tablet per gallon of must and allow 24 hours for the sulfites to dissipate.
- 9) You may transfer the must and allow it to settle for 3-4 weeks if clarity is desired, or proceed immediately to bottling.

5 Gallon Chokecherry Wine Recipe

15-20 lbs. fresh chokecherries
Top Up Water to 5 gallons
10.5 lbs. sugar
5 tsp. acid blend
1 tbsp. yeast nutrient
2½ tsp. pectic enzyme
10 Campden tablet, crushed (optional)
(5 before fermentation, 5 after)

1 packet Montrachet yeast

1 Gallon Chokecherry Wine Recipe

(Fuller body and flavor than the 5-gallon recipe)

1 Gallon Chokecherry Juice
NO TOP UP WATER
2.1 lbs. sugar
1 tsp. acid blend
1 tsp. yeast nutrient
½ tsp. pectic enzyme
2 Campden tablet, crushed (optional)
(1 before fermentation, 1 after)
1 packet Montrachet yeast

A Primer on Secondary Fermentation

We recommend secondary fermentation for most wines and find the benefits worth the extra time. If you prefer not to allow for secondary fermentation skip this section and go to 'Bottling Your Wine'.

Purpose

Secondary fermentation is a 1 – 4 week (or longer if you prefer) conditioning process where the yeast finish up their job, so to speak, by re-processing some of the by-products (esters, aldehydes, fusel alcohols) that they produced during the early stages of fermentation.

As the yeast consume all of the fermentable sugars in the juice and food supplies run out they begin to re-process some of the excess esters and other flavor compounds that they gave off early in fermentation. The removal of these excess flavor compounds in effect 'cleans up' the wine. The extra conditioning time in the fermenter allows for the wine to become more rounded which improves the flavor profile. An added benefit of the extra time necessary for secondary fermentation is a more clear wine. As food supplies run out, yeast begins to store up food reserves and go dormant. As they become inactive they will clump together (flocculate) and settle out of the wine.

Method

The popular method of secondary fermentation is to transfer the wine to a secondary fermenter. A secondary fermenter is usually a glass or PET jug/carboy. You want minimal head space in the carboy to keep as little air in contact with the finishing beer as possible.

Once primary fermentation slows, around 7-10 days, gently rack your wine out of the primary fermenter into a clean, sanitized jug or carboy (secondary fermenter). Attach a stopper and airlock and leave it to condition and clarify in the secondary for 1 week or more. When you see the wine becoming clearer it is a good indication that you can bottle your wine. You may want to take another gravity reading before you bottle as the final gravity may have dropped a bit.

Bottling Your Wine

Once your brew is finished fermenting it is time to bottle it. You will need: 10 12 oz crown top beer bottles (not twist off) or 5 wine bottles per gallon of wine, a bottling bucket, a racking cane or auto siphon with approx. 5' of tubing, a bottle filler tube, 10 bottle caps or 5 wine corks, sanitizing solution, a bottle capper or corker, potassium sorbate/sulfites, and optional sugar.

- 1) Clean and sanitize your bottles, bottling bucket, racking cane, tubing, bottle filler and caps/corks.
- 2) Using your sanitized racking cane or auto-siphon transfer your finished wine from your primary or secondary fermenter into the bottling bucket. Make sure that the end of the tubing that is in the bottling bucket is resting on the bottom of the bucket so that it quickly covers up with wine. The wine will mix with the sugar solution as it transfers. Leave the yeast at the bottom of the fermenter (called trub) behind.
- 3) (Optional) Sample the wine. If desired, you may add sugar to sweeten the final product to taste. First add Potassium Sorbate to prevent refermentation (1/2 tsp. per gallon). Prepare the back-sweetening sugar by simmering it in ample water for 5-10 min. Let it stand for a few minutes then pour the solution into your wine. You do not need to cool it down first.
- 4) Once the wine is transferred into the bottling bucket it is time to fill the bottles. Connect the transfer tubing to the bottling bucket spigot and the other end to the bottle filler.
- 5) Fill each bottle by inserting the bottle filler all the way to the bottom of the bottle and depressing the valve. Lift bottle filler when the wine reaches the top of the bottle to stop the flow. As you remove the filler it will displace the correct amount of wine for the proper head-space in the bottle.
- 6) Place a bottle cap on the bottle and crimp it with the bottle capper, or use the corker to secure the wine bottles.
- 7) This wine will greatly benefit with age. Typical flavor peak may be around 6-12 months, but feel free to enjoy early as well. You deserve it!