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Admiral's Cyser

Mead in its simplest form is honey and water brought to fermentation. The history of mead predates the Egyptian empire and may be as old as the birth of agriculture. Mead is known in today's culture as the drink of the Vikings. This comes from many references to the feasts and beliefs of the Vikings but in fact mead was widespread throughout many cultures. Cyser is the addition of apple juice or cider to a honey wine. While many folks will say that fruit was added to mead all the time there is rarely any specifics on these occasions or recipes to follow. I have found no direct source for Cyser in period sources at this time even though we know apples are a fairly common fruit and widely used throughout Europe. So, this does not fall under the auspices of a true period beverage currently.

To recreate this most basic of beverages I asked many brewers about ratios of water to honey and received a variety of answers. Reading "The Closet of Sir Kenelme Digby" I found the following excerpt from his Metheglyn on pg86. *"Take twenty Gallons of Spring-water; boil it a quarter of an hour, and let it stand, until it be all most cold; then beat in so much honey, as will make it so strong as to bear an Egg, so that on the Top, you may see the breadth of a hazel-nut swimming above;"*. This measurement seemed to repeat itself as a standard throughout his writings so I used this as my base measurement. To find this balance I started with 35 pints of water and four 5lb bottles of white clover honey. The water total I guessed at using my experience with modern recipes I had found, allowing me to get close to 5 gallons total without overflowing my brew pot. To create the cyser I simply replaced the water in this method to fresh cider. I mixed honey into the fresh cider slowly till it reached the point where the egg floated showing the breadth of a hazel-nut above the surface. By counting the empty bottles and what was left of my honey I used 15lbs for a 5 gallon batch. This measurement leads to an average 1.09 SG. To pick the yeast for this batch The Lalvin 71B-1122 yeast is a slower acting yeast than I am used to but it was a good exercise in patience.