

Making Creamed Honey, Flavored and Natural by Joli Winer & Cecil Sweeney

This will be about the "Dyce Process" for making creamed honey, but, more importantly, a practical method for using those basic principals for making small batches.

What is creamed honey?

Creamed or crystallized honey is honey made to crystallize smoothly by seeding with 10% finely crystallized honey and storing at about 57° F.

We make a 60-pound batch at one time, which isn't a huge batch, but it will yield about 80+ 12-oz. containers. You can make a batch any size you want. But for the purposes of this article we'll do our 60-pound batch. We think it is best to use your lightest mildest flavored honey.

Moisture must be below 18.6%, so it won't ferment. Honey crystallizes best if it is below 18% in moisture content; it does best in the 18%- 17.5% range. If you use honey in a lower moisture range your product will be very firm and not as spreadable. However, if you are using powdered freeze-dried fruits for flavoring your honey the moisture should be about 18%. The freeze-dried fruit sucks up the moisture from your honey and makes it too firm if your moisture is lower than 18%. To bring your moisture level up to 18% you may have to add water. If your honey is 17% and you want to bring it up to 18% you need to calculate using the following formula. To bring your honey up 1% add 1 lb. of water to 100 lbs. of honey. That would be ½ lbs. of water for 50-lbs. etc.

Our first step involves heating the honey to 140° to remove any crystals that may have formed already. You want your crystals to be as small as possible and to be made from the starter you will add. At this point we pour half of the honey into another bucket so that each bucket has about 30 pounds of honey in it. We use two buckets, each with a

honey gate, for bottling the creamed honey mixture. If using the powdered freeze-dried fruit it is best to add it when the honey is still warm*(see mixing in the powdered freeze-dried fruit at the end). Then let the honey cool to less than 80°F. You can let this honey sit for 24 hours (even a few hours is beneficial) so any foam & or air bubbles can rise to the top. (If you are on a time schedule, this step can be eliminated.) Then, using your spatula or by using saran wrap laid down on the top of the foam and pressing it down you can gently remove any foam and air bubbles.

The next step is the most crucial. Start with a good starter. We always purchase starter at the grocery store by buying a commercially prepared product from either Sue Bee or Golden Heritage Foods. Make sure you start with a tiny crystal that feels smooth on your tongue. Also choose a starter that is firm and not runny. The best percentage is to use 5%-10% ratio of starter to honey. The more starter you use the faster it will set up. We use 6 pounds of starter for each 60-pound batch. The starter and the honey need to be at room temperature so it will mix better. We put the starter into a smaller bowl and mash it around so it will be easier to mix into the bulk honey. We then divide the starter in ½ and put that into each bucket. Now comes the fun part! How do you blend the starter with honey? We have been using a ½" drill with a stainless steel dry wall paddle on it. This works fairly well. When one of our friends helped us the drill wasn't at home and she had a big wire whisk that you can get at a restaurant supply store. Actually this worked quite well. Mix the starter in very well. Your honey will take on a marbled appearance and you will be able to actually see the starter as it mixes in. You can either bottle at

this point or let it sit for 24 hours to let any foam and air rise to the top and then remove the foam using the above methods. Remember you are incorporating a lot of air into the mixture. We have been doing this step and consider it important. If you are putting your creamed honey in glass or clear plastic containers you'll definitely want to do this step. Otherwise, you get a fine layer of foam on the top that you can see it on the creamed honey, but it doesn't affect the taste at all. One book also said that if you can let it set at 40°F for several hours this will stop the bubbles and foam from rising to the top.

Now we are ready to bottle it. We are using a plastic opaque tub, nothing fancy. You could use any decorative jar or container.

After this is done we lug it out to our extra refrigerator. Optimal temperature for making honey crystallize is 57°F. Our refrigerator has a wine cooler thermostat or temperature control unit on it. This thermostat will keep the temperature at 57°F. It takes ours about 6-10 days to become firm.

If your product becomes too firm you may have to do what is called 'conditioning.' To do this, place your honey in a room with the temperature between about 80-90°F. This will sufficiently soften up your creamed honey and make it more spreadable.

It is best to store creamed honey at about 70°. Much warmer can make it too soft and once it reliquefies or starts to reliquefy you have to start the process all over, beginning with emptying your jars and heating your honey. When we go to outdoor craft fairs and markets we keep our creamed honey in a cooler and just have 'dummy' or empty labeled containers for display on the table.

Tips for Using Freeze-dried Powdered Fruit, Nuts

Another one of our friends uses flavoring extracts. She makes a maple pecan using real pecans and maple flavoring. Remember that the flavoring adds moisture to you honey. She uses the taste method — if it tastes ok that's how much you should use. She tried using maple syrup and did not like the way that turned out. She has also been doing a coconut, maple pecan and using pecans and maple and coconut extract.

We have made several batches of pecan creamed honey. We use two cups of pecans per gallon of honey. I tried to grind the pecans up in the blender but was afraid I'd have pecan butter if I kept going so the pieces were bigger than they should have been. We have since found that pecan meal or really finely ground pecan mixes in beautifully. Some of the pecans rise to the top but some stay suspended. It really makes a beautiful product. The last batch we made we used 5 cups of the pecan meal for a 5-gallon batch plus 10 cups of the pecan pieces.

For cinnamon creamed honey we use real cinnamon. I buy good cinnamon in bulk at Penzeys (we like the Vietnamese). We use 1 cup, about 4 oz. for a 5-gallon batch. I have tried using the cinnamon from the grocery store and didn't like it. So make sure and get the good stuff.

Using the powdered dried fruits is a little tricky. The amount of freeze-dried powdered fruits that you use is approximate. For a 5 gallon batch we are using 1 lb. of fruit. You may like it to have a stronger flavor so add more.

We take one gallon of very warm honey and put that in a bowl then we slowly whisk in the freeze dried powdered fruit. After the fruit is mixed in it can be added to the rest of the honey for the batch, after it all cools, add your starter and proceed

as above. Remember, when adding other foods to your honey you'll have to make sure and add that to your label. If you use any dried fruit with preservatives in them-like sulfites, you must also list that on your label.

Anything that you add to your creamed honey or liquid honey adds another medium for your honey to crystallize on and can make your creamed honey have a larger crystal than you want.

Properly processed honey will retain its firm, creamy consistency at normal room temperature, but will break down at high temperatures. Recooling will not make it firm again.

Key Points:

1. Check the moisture content of your honey.
2. Heat your honey to remove any crystals that have already formed.
3. Use good firm, finely granulated starter.
4. 57°F
5. Don't try to rush it.

Additional Recipes:

Pecan Creamed Honey for 5 gallons

10 cups of small pecan pieces
5 cups of pecan meal

Jalapeno Creamed Honey 5 gallon batch

1 lb. of Air Dried Jalapeno powder

I got two different recipes from people doing **Jalapeno & Raspberry Creamed Honey**

One for 5 gallons:

1 lb. Air Dried Jalapeno
½ lb. Freeze- Dried Raspberry Powder

One for 1 gallon:

¼ cup Jalapeno powder
¾ cup Raspberry powder

This is probably a good example of using the taste test method & keep good records.

Apple Cinnamon or Peach Cinnamon—can also be called Apple Cobbler or Peach Cobbler
For 5 gallons use
1 lb. of the powdered fruit
1 cup or 4 oz. of Cinnamon

Chocolate Creamed Honey

1 gallon batch:
Nestles Bakers pre-melted unsweetened chocolate flavor in 1 oz. packets

Use 4 packets per gallon (Use 20 1 oz. packets for 5 gallons)

Note: Have also had friends that have used powdered cocoa so just experiment

Cinnamon

5 gallons
Use 1 cup or about 4 oz.

Infused Honey

Joan Vibert's article and then her talk at the Funday encouraged me to try to make some infused honey. I made a vanilla and a ginger with orange and lemon (in honor of Robert Burns' delicious mead). So I took 12 Mexican vanilla beans from Penzeys spices, cut them in half and added them to one gallon of honey. I put the gallon into the hot box at 120°F for 48 hours. It is absolutely incredible tasting! Strong enough that I am going to try to use the vanilla beans over well—I might just cut a piece to put a little in each jar. I figured that my cost on the vanilla will be about \$.84 per 8 oz. jar.

For the ginger, orange & lemon infused honey I used a 4 oz. bag of whole root china ginger, dried, plus 2 tablespoons

of orange peel and 2 tablespoons of lemon peel. I put this in one gallon of honey and put it into the hot box at 120°F for 48 hours. Not everyone likes ginger so it wasn't as big a hit as the vanilla but I'll see how it sells and let you know.

A hot box is a non-working refrigerator or insulated box that has been converted to a hot box with the addition of a heat limit control and a light bulb. The light bulb comes on and supplies the heat to decrystallize honey or in this case heat my honey for the infused honey.

Infused Honey Recipes

Vanilla Infused

1 gallon honey
12 vanilla beans (I liked the Mexican)
Cut the vanilla beans up in smaller pieces and add to honey. Put in hot box on about 115-120° or warm sunny area for at least 48 hours - 1 week
Strain through a sieve to keep the vanilla pieces out of the jars—I used the vanilla beans over 3 times and the taste was still very good!

Ginger Lemon & Orange

4 oz. bag of whole root china ginger, dried,
2 tablespoons of orange peel
2 tablespoons of lemon peel.

Put in hot box on about 115-120° or warm sunny area for at least 48 hours - 1 week
Strain through a sieve to keep the ginger and orange and lemon peel out of the jars
Note: I think we can use fresh ginger and cut it up in smaller

pieces—the dried ginger is really hard to cut up and impossible to break up.

Lavender Infused honey

Note: Lavender isn't our favorite flavoring but customers asked for it so we started with 1/2 oz. of French Lavender in one gallon that I got from Penzey's spices. After a week the honey was "floral" tasting but you really couldn't taste the lavender. The next batch I used 1 oz. We went to the farm of a Lavender grower and he said to use 1-2 cups per 1-1/2 gallons. Suggested we use Provence Lavender. We are still experimenting with this one!

Cinnamon Infused

Use 3 sticks of Cinnamon per jar or bear—put in a warm place & sell it!
The longer this sits the better it is.

Garlic Infused

I used 1 garlic bulb per jar

References:

Honey Bee Biology and Beekeeping by Dr. Dewey Caron, page 17.256, and 343.

ABC and XYZ of Bee Culture published by the A.I. Root CO., 143-146 pages.

Supplies:

Heartland Honey and Beekeeping Supplies 913-856-8356

Freeze-dried powdered fruit,
Thermostat to convert a refrigerator

Penezys Spices
800-547-1392
Penezys.com

Miller Honey Company
Creamed Honey Starter
Salt Lake City UT
801-486-8479