

# Digby's White Metheglin

I chose the recipe for white metheglin (spiced mead) from Digby on p85 of *A Sip Through Time* (Renfrow, 2008 revision) as a first attempt at a period metheglin recipe due to its short list of actually obtainable ingredients.



## TO MAKE WHITE METHEGLIN

*Take a Gallon of Honey; put to it four Gallons of water; stir them well together, and boil them in a Kettle, till a Gallon be wasted with boiling and scumming. Then put it into a vessel to cool. When it is almost as cold as Ale-wort, then clear it out into another vessel: Then put Barm upon it, as you do to your Ale, and so let it work. And then Tun it up into a vessel, and put into it a bag with Ginger, Cloves, and Cinamon bruised a little, and so hang the bag in the vessel, and stop it up very close; and when it hath stood a month or six weeks, bottle it up and so drink it. You may put in a little Limmon-peel into some of your Metheglin, for those that like that taste; which most persons do very much.*

## [The Closet of Sir Kenelm Digby Knight Opened](#)

### Ingredients

4 litres water

1 litre honey (litre, not kilogram)

Ginger root, approx 3cm, peeled into fine slices with potato peeler

Cloves, 3

Cinnamon sticks, 2

Yeast, 1/2 packet Mangrove Jack's Kveik Ale yeast

1/2tsp yeast nutrient

### Method

Digby would have us boil the gallon of honey with 4 gallons water, skimming, "til a Gallon be wasted". I boiled and skimmed it about half an hour, as I wanted to aim for an initial pABV of 14%, which I calculated would require most of the 4:1 of water before boiling it away. 14% should in theory allow the kveik yeast to ferment up to its tolerance of 12% and leave approx the equivalent of 2% in sugar, a fairly sweet result. I was pretty spot on with the initial sugar content.

Once the mixture had cooled I added yeast nutrient and dry yeast, then whisked for some minutes with the barmix whipping attachment to oxygenate per my other brews, and left to brew for a couple of weeks.

After some drama where it seemed the yeast had not worked much and I re-pitched with hydrated yeast to no avail, I tested with the hydrometer and discovered it had probably finished. I racked it into a new bucket and suspended in a linen bag with the ginger, cloves and cinnamon, which I'd smacked a bit with the back of a knife.

It's been sitting there a nice 5 weeks now and I will bottle it and test its sugar content and flavour in the coming few days.

### **Update**

Now bottled, 12th April. It finished at 11% and quite sweet. And not nearly as strongly spiced as I had hoped. A pleasant flavour, slightly yeasty but my experience so far suggests that will mellow off over the next week.

Next time I think I will try boiling the spices in the must and, using mead yeast, try for a higher alcohol content and lower sweetness.

### **Brewing notes**

Initial pABV: 14%

Final pABV: 3%

Actual ABV: 11%

Kveik yeast, re-pitched with mead yeast, although this did not seem to take.

Finish: Sweet, mildly spiced.