

CIDER PRESSING

Apple Selection:

Types of apples- early season vs. late, storage vs. fresh

- picking apples from ground
- roadside trees
- orchards

Hard Cider:

- sweet
- sharp
- bittersweet
- bitter-sharp

* some say adding pears produces a better cider

Ripeness- apples are ripe when seeds are brown

Storage (sweating)- developing sugars in storage after harvest

- check for bruising and damage before storing
- release ethylene gas that can cause spoilage

Ways to store:

- refrigeration
- wrapped
- cool space (basement or garage), a cooler with the lid cracked open
- “Apple house”

Pressing Process

1) Washing:

Rinse apples in a water bath. Sort as you go. Questionable apples should be set aside and inspected. They can be cut up to remove bad portion. Some damage or bug marks are okay.

2) Maceration:

“Chewing”/grinding/bruising apples to help release juices

3) Pressing:

Squeeze the juice from the mash until the mash runs dry

4) Filtering:

Strain out any pulp or bugs that may land in the juice while pressing

5) Bottling/canning:

Pour filtered juice into glass jars or clean plastic jugs. Use fresh, freeze (be sure to leave headspace for expansion), or can for a shelf-stable product.

After pressing:

The pressed apple mash will need to be disposed of. It can be put in a compost bin, left out for wildlife such as deer, or fed to larger livestock like pigs. Do not feed large quantities of mash to chickens, as the arsenic in the seeds can kill them. Keep mash away from areas where children frequent, as the cider process attracts wasps, and they especially like to hang around the mash.

There are multiple methods for making cider without a large grinder or press.

Cheese grater method: Apples can be grated (minus the core), placed in a cheese cloth or flour sack towel and squeezed by hand, catching the juice in a bowl for a serving or two of cider.

Meat grinder method: Apples can be cut into quarters or smaller and run through a meat grinder to macerate. They can either be strained by hand by wrapping the mash in a flour sack towel or a clean cotton pillowcase and twisting and squeezing until the juice is sufficiently removed. You can also pillowcase inside of a sausage stuffer to filter and press the mash. Catch juice in a bowl or other vessel.

Juicer: A good juicer works well for making a sizeable amount of cider quickly.

Cider Products:

- Apple cider (fresh, frozen, or canned)
- Alcoholic- hard cider, apple wine, apple brandy
- Cider syrup, cider candy (hard candy or caramels)
- Apple Cheddar soup
- Apple Rye bread

Use fresh cider within 72 hours. Cider will ferment quickly!

If freezing, you can use milk jugs... rinse jug and cap thoroughly with hot water. Let air dry before storing empty jugs. Do not fill beyond the bend in the jug. It will expand while freezing. The dent in the side of the jug will pop out during freezing.

For canning, fill jars to 1/2" from rim of sterilized glass jars. Wipe rim clean, and place sterilized lid. Screw ring to fingertip tight. Put in pot with cold or room temperature water. Cover with 1" water. Bring water to a boil. Continue cooking for 20 minutes. Turn off heat and remove jars after 10 minutes. Let cool overnight. Remove rings before storing. Half-gallon jars can be canned in a tall pot, but you will probably need to top off the water as it cooks. Can in jars of appropriate size according to how quickly it will be used. Once opened, use within 72 hours.

Cider intended for apple production should either undergo the first steps of production immediately (within three days), or be frozen until it is ready to be used.

Saints for apples- St. Dorothy (Feb. 6th), Ss. Teilo (Feb. 9th) and Samson, St. Irene (July 28th), St. Euphrosynos (Sept. 11th)

Apple tree blessing done in February (St. Dorothy, St. Teilo)

Prayers for trees done during Rogation days

Apple wassailing (blessing the apple tree) is an old tradition done in England on Twelfth Night

Blessing of Fruit Trees and Vines

V. Our help is in the name of the Lord.

R. Who has made heaven and earth.

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with your spirit.

Let us pray.

We beg You in Your goodness, almighty God, to pour the showers of Your blessing upon these newly budding trees and vines which You have made, and which You have been so kind as to nourish with temperate weather and sufficient rain. Bring the fruits of Your earth to full ripeness. Grant, too, that Your people may always give You thanks for Your gifts, so that You may fill them that are hungry with the fruits of a fertile land and that the poor and the needy may praise the glory of Your name, through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

(And they are sprinkled with holy water.)

Prayer Source: *Rural Life Prayerbook* by Alban J. Dachauer, S.J.,

Cider Syrup Recipe:

- 2 cups apple juice, *or fresh apple cider*
- ☐ 1 cup brown sugar
- ☐ 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- ☐ 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- ☐ 1/8 teaspoon nutmeg
- ☐ 1/8 teaspoon salt
- ☐ 1½ tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- ☐ 1/4 cup butter
- ☐ 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

Instructions

- Heat a heavy bottomed saucepan over medium heat, then add the apple juice, brown sugar, cornstarch, cinnamon, nutmeg, salt, apple cider vinegar, and butter and whisk to combine.
- Bring the mixture to a boil and continue to boil for 2 minutes while stirring occasionally.
- Remove from heat, add the vanilla, and stir again.
- Allow to cool completely, then serve with pancakes, waffles, French toast, or ice cream. Enjoy!