

Brewing Documentation Examples

By Master Donal O'Brien, OL

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Brewers put a lot of effort into **creating** tasty drinks, whether it is period beverage or a modern example of mead, wine, beer, soda, vinegar, cordial, etc. Documenting your brews can quickly become second nature.

A brewing recipe communicates a great deal of information in only a few words. It lists the ingredients used in a particular brew, how those ingredients are put together and **what happens to the brew as time goes on**.

In general, it is better to have more detail than less detail in your documentation.

Documentation is 15% (15 points out of 100) of your score on the judging sheets used by The Right Noble Brewers Guild of Caia. The documentation portion is broken down into four parts: Recipe (2 points), Log Notes (6 points), Bibliography (2 points) and Historical Notes (5 points).

The Recipe - Name and Type of Brew

The first thing to list is the name of the brew. The name of the brew often identifies the drink's type or style (like Black Hole Imperial Stout, Dragon's Blood Raspberry Cordial or the Bee's Knees Sweet Mead). Sometimes the name IS the style: #77 American Pale Ale or Rose Syrup #9.

It is a good idea to write down the date when you started the batch (to help identify how old a brew might be) and the **size of the batch** (one quart, a gallon, 10 gallons).

The Recipe - Ingredients

Make sure to list every ingredient and how much of each ingredient **that** goes into your brew. Record if an ingredient is processed in any specific way (frozen, chopped, pureed, cracked, etc.) or has a particular brand name. If a component is made up of its own list of ingredients, include that list as well.

The Recipe - Procedure

Each step you take to make your brew should be listed. You should include details like the original gravity of the wort or must before yeast was added, the final gravity when fermentation is finished, the temperature that grains were mashed or steeped, how long did the syrup boil, what kind of brewing vessel you use, etc.

Judging Sheet Documentation - Recipe (2 points)

No recipe is 0 points. If ingredients and procedure are only listed in the log notes, only 1 point will be assigned. A complete recipe consisting of a complete list of ingredients and the entire brewing procedure is 2 points.

Log Notes

If you used someone else's recipe as inspiration or a guide, list that recipe here.

Why is the recipe formulated that way? Why this hop? Why that malt? How did the batch come out? How can it be improved?

Judging Sheet Documentation - Log Notes (6 points)

No log notes results in 0 points. Listing only 2-3 lines of notation is worth 1-2 points for this section. Less than a page of notes is 3-4 points. A book of notes is 5-6 points.

Bibliography

What books or online sources did you use in developing or researching your brew? If you are trying to recreate a period recipe, where did you find the original source recipe? What books did you use to learn about brewing equipment, techniques or equipment? What sources did you use to find out if certain ingredients were used in period?

Judging Sheet Documentation - Bibliography (2 points)

No attempt at a bibliography is 0 points. Listing one or two books, magazine articles or website URLs is 1 point. A quarter-page full of print and online sources is 2 points.

The Compleat Anachronist #5 - Handbook of Brewing is considered an inappropriate source.

Historical Notes

A drink has to have some history, whether it was made in the time periods we are trying to recreate or a beverage that originated in the past couple of centuries. Ingredients used to make drinks can have histories stretching back for millennium.

Historical notes can cover more than just the history of the beverage. They can cover how drinks were stored and traded in period, where certain ingredients originated, how brewing equipment and techniques changes over the centuries and how the beverages were used by common men and nobles. References to different drinks can be found in period guild and taxation records. Results from archaeological excavation and scientific analysis often cover important historical details.

Judging Sheet Documentation - Historical Notes (5 notes)

No historical notes result in 0 points. A couple of lines defining if a beverage is a modern or period drink is 1 point. A less than a page of notes is 2-3 points. A page of notes is 3-4 points. Two or more pages of notes is 5 points.

Documentation Examples

[Here is an example of bad documentation:](#)

I made beer. Beer is period. Here is beer.

[Here is an example of adequate documentation:](#)

Sweet Mead

Ingredients:

4 cups of wildflower honey
12 cups of hard water
1 packet of Coopers dry ale yeast

OG: 1.110

FG: 1.026

Approx. Alcohol by volume: 9.8%

Procedure:

Pour 4 cups of wildflower honey into a gallon glass jug. Add 12 cups of hard water to the jug. Use a long spoon handle (or other narrow object) to stir the honey at the bottom of the jug. Continue to stir until all of the honey is dissolved.

Pour off 1 1/2 cups of the must into a quart jar. Add a packet of Coopers dry ale yeast. Still well to mix and aerate. Break up any clumps of yeast cells that might form. Set aside for 30 minutes to let the yeast cell rehydrate and start to multiply.

Add the activated yeast back into the jug. Swirl the contents of the jug for 2 minutes to mix and aerate. Attach an airlock and set aside.

Log Notes:

The water I normally use for my meads is only slightly hard. I have wanted to make a mead with much harder water. Turns out the water at my parents' house is very hard. So I brought home a gallon of their hard water to make a mead. There is a definite taste difference between my tap water and the water from my parents' house. This is a fairly generic mead using a nice dark wildflower honey and Coopers ale yeast. I chose the ale yeast for two reasons. I want to see if the yeast can handle a fairly high original specific gravity. I also want to measure the yeast's alcohol tolerance. Coopers ale yeast should not influence the taste of the mead in any significant way. The hard water should leave a distinct flavor in the mead. Two hours after adding the yeast, there is an inch-thick krausen. The airlock is already bubbling once every 16 seconds. The rate of bubbling should increase very rapidly in the next few hours. Eight hours after adding the yeast, there is no more foam on top of the must. You can tell that the yeast are very happy right now by the billions of bubbles being created. The airlock bubbles once every 4-5 seconds. A few days later, the airlock bubbles once every 16 seconds. There is about an inch worth of dregs at the bottom of the carboy. A month later I racked the mead. Six months later I racked the mead. The airlock has been dry for a very long time. The mead tastes tart. Three more months of aging, I racked and bottled the mead.

Historical Notes:

Mead is an alcoholic beverage made from honey, water, and yeast. It is probably the first alcoholic drink known to man. Nearly every civilization around the world has traditions of mead making and mead drinking. These groups range from the Greeks and Romans to the Vikings, Saxons, Mayans, Ethiopians, Yemeni, and Australian aboriginal peoples.

Honey begins as nectar, a sweet mixture of sugar and water, produced by flowers to attract honeybees and other insects to aid in pollination. The color and taste of honey is affected by kinds of flowers the bees visited, climatic conditions of the area around the hive, as well as the time of the year. In general, you can say "the darker the honey, the stronger the taste."

Honey is general identified by the variety of flower the bees collected from. Here is a list of different types of honey commonly used to make mead:

Alfalfa - Very light honey with a pleasing, mild flavor and aroma
Clover - Light honey with pleasing, mild taste
Sage - Light honey with a mild flavor
Orange Blossom - Light honey with a fresh scent and sweet taste
Tupelo - Light heavy bodied honey with a distinctive taste
Wildflower - Dark honey blended for a mild flavor
Buckwheat - Very dark and full-bodied honey

Other varieties of honey include: acacia, apple, avocado, basswood, blackberry, blueberry, cranberry, echinacea, eucalyptus, fireweed, foxglove, gallberry, goldenrod, holly, huckleberry, locust, palmetto, peppermint, raspberry, sourwood, star thistle, tulip poplar.

The largest ingredient in mead, by volume, is water. Use the best water available. Yeast is a type of single-celled fungi that multiplies by budding. The yeast ferments sugars present around it, giving off carbon dioxide (CO₂) and alcohol (ethanol).

Bibliography:

Krupp, Christina M. and Bill Gillen. "Making Medieval Mead or, Mead Before Digby". The Compleat Anachronist #120 (Summer 2003). The Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc., 2003;

Schramm, Ken. The Compleat Meadmaker. Brewers Publications, 2003; ISBN10 0937381802, ISBN13 9780937381809

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Got Mead?

<http://www.gotmead.com/>

[Here is an example of good documentation:](#)

Batch #49 - Russian Imperial Stout

March 13, 2005

(recipe for 5 gallons)

Ingredients:

4 1/2 gallons of water

3 1/2 gallons of water

10 pounds of 2 row malt

2 pounds of Munich malt

1/2 pound of white wheat malt

3/4 pound of Carapils malt

1 pound of Crystal 120L malt

1 pound of Special B malt

1 1/2 pound of chocolate malt

3/4 pound of black patent malt

3/4 pound of roasted barley

3 quarts of water

1 ounce of GR Northern Brewer hop pellets (7.6% alpha) - 90 minutes

1 ounce of GR Northern Brewer hop pellets (7.6% alpha) - 75 minutes

1/2 ounce of GR Northern Brewer hop pellets (7.6% alpha) - 60 minutes

1 ounce of UK Kent Goldings hop pellets (5.6% alpha) - 20 minutes

1 1/2 ounce of UK Kent Goldings hop pellets (5.6% alpha) - 2 minutes

1 vial of White Labs WLP028 Edinburgh Ale yeast

2/3 cup of corn sugar

1 cup of water

OG: 1.086 (originally 1.084 @ 75 degrees F)

FG: 1.022 (originally 1.020 @ 77 degrees F)

Approx. Alcohol by volume: 8.5%

Procedure:

Heat 4 1/2 gallons of water to 170 degrees F. Heat 3 1/2 gallons of water to 120 degrees F. Pour the cracked grain into a 7.5 gallon brew pot. [The 18 1/4 pounds of grain filled the brew up to the 5 gallon mark.] Pour all of the 4/12 gallons of hot water onto the grains two quarts at a time. Stir well after each addition of hot water. Pour 3 quarts of 120 degree F water into the brew pot to bring the volume right to the brim. [Make sure to add 3 quarts of water back bring the batch back to 3 1/2 gallons.] Mash the grains for 65 minutes at 150 degrees F to 152 degrees F. Pour the wort and grains through a grain bag in a bottling bucket. Recover as much of the first wort as possible. [I recovered 3 1/2 gallons of the first wort.] Pour the grains back into the mash tun. Heat the 3 1/2 gallons of water to 160 degrees F. Add the hot water to the mash tun. Stir well and let sit for 30 minutes. Pour the second wort through the grain bag in a bucket. Draw off as much of the second wort as possible. [I collected 3 1/2 gallons of the second wort.]

Rinse out the mash tun. Combine both worts in the 7.5 gallon brew pot. Bring the wort to a boil. [This took about an hour.] Boil the wort for 90 minutes, using the following hop schedule:
1 ounce of GR Northern Brewer hop pellets (7.6% alpha) at the beginning of the boil
1 ounce of GR Northern Brewer hop pellets (7.6% alpha) 15 minutes into the boil
1/2 ounce of GR Northern Brewer hop pellets (7.6% alpha) 30 minutes into the boil
1 ounce of UK Kent Goldings hop pellets (5.6% alpha) 70 minutes into the boil
1 1/2 ounce of UK Kent Goldings hop pellets (5.6% alpha) 88 minutes into the boil

90 minutes into the boil, turn off the heat. Move the brew pot to a cold water bath. Cool the wort to 75 degrees F. Pour the wort into a 6 1/2 gallon glass carboy. Swirl the contents of the carboy for a couple of minutes to aerate. Add a vial of White Labs WLP028 Edinburgh ale yeast to the carboy. Swirl the carboy again for a couple of minutes to mix and aerate. Attach an airlock and set aside.

When fermentation is complete, dissolve 2/3 cup of corn sugar in 1 cup of water. Pour the sugar water into a bottling bucket. Rack the ale from the carboy into the bottling bucket. Fill and cap beer bottles. Set aside to age. Then share and enjoy.

Notes:

March 13, 2005:

Richard Unger, in *Beer in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* mentions beer coming in a rainbow of colors, from black to white, brown, yellow, and red. He mentions a high-quality beer called *Joopen* or *Joopenbier* that was popular in northwestern Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Joopen is described as "a dark, red-brown, sweet, heavy, slow-flowing, and very expensive beer originally from Gdansk but brewed in a number of places in Germany by the sixteenth century."

Porter (first mentioned as a style of beer in 1721) was the popular beer style of England in the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century. It was made from both pale malt (for most of the fermentable sugars) and brown malt (for color and flavor components).

Daniel Wheeler invented the drum roaster in 1817 that could dry malt to an intensely dark color without burning. This allowed for the creation of very dark, roasted malts like "black malt" or "patent malt". The use of black malt to impart dark color to porter also introduces a distinct burnt flavor to the beer.

Stout (first mentioned as a style of beer in 1734) implies a stronger version of a porter. Arthur Guinness opened his brewery at St. James Gate, Dublin, Ireland in 1759. There he started his now-world-famous Irish Stout. Brewers in the south of England created a stout with a high level of alcohol and hoppiness was designed to be shipped to Russia and the Baltic states. The high level of alcohol and bitterness from the hops allowed the stout to survive the travel by ship to Baltic ports.

Brewed heavy and strong, the aroma of a Russian Imperial Stout may be subtle or nearly overwhelming, taking on tones of dark plum, coffee, chocolate, and burnt toast. The color should range from dark purplish brown to jet-black. The beer should have a well-formed, creamy, caramel-

colored head. The flavor should be rich and complex. Roasted maltiness should blend well with an intense hoppiness and noticeable alcohol presence. The mouthfeel should be very full, almost chewy.

This is the biggest beer that I have made so far. Normally I use between 9 and 12 pounds of base and specialty grains. This batch used 18 1/4 pounds of base and specialty grains. I was trying for a starting gravity of 1.090, which would give me a beer with 9% alcohol by volume (assuming a final gravity of 1.022). I am pleased that I missed the mark by only 4 points. If I had done a second batch sparge to squeeze the last bit of sugar from the grains, I am sure that I would have achieved 1.090. I know that I could have added a pound or two of brown sugar to kick up the fermentables. I decided to see how big a beer I could make without any adjuncts.

I am hoping for a nice, strong chocolate/coffee flavor to this stout, which is why I added so much chocolate malt. The black patent malt did its job well of turning the wort black. The crystal 120L should give some residual sweetness. The carapils malt should provide a good silky mouth feel. The wheat malt should aid in head retention. And the hop schedule should produce a nice, balancing bitterness to the high alcohol content of the beer.

I took specific gravity reading for all of the worts. I recovered 3 1/2 gallons of first wort which had a specific gravity of 1.086 (originally 1.084 @ 78 degrees F). I recovered 3 1/2 gallons of seconds wort with a specific gravity of 1.044 (originally 1.042 @ 76 degrees F). Combining the two worts for a total of 7 gallons created a pre-boil specific gravity of 1.066 (originally 1.064 @ 75 degrees F). It took an hour to bring the wort to a boil. The 90 minute boil for the hops reduced the volume down to 5 gallons of wort. The final gravity was 1.086 (originally 1.084 @ 75 degrees F).

I added the vial of Edinburgh yeast to 1 1/2 cups of the first wort and stirred well. Even though the little starter sat aside for at least two hours, I did not see any activity of the yeast multiplying. I added starter to the carboy after swirling the wort for a couple of minutes to aerate. Let's see how long it takes before the airlock starts bubbling quickly.

March 14, 2005: There is no airlock activity yet. It has been over 24 hours since I added the yeast. I do not know if this is due to the yeast itself, the ambient room temperature (about 75 degrees F), lack of aeration, or the high sugar content of the wort.

March 15, 2005: My patience has been rewarded. We finally have a good krausen! It took about 36 hours for a krausen to start forming. The airlock is bubbling about twice per second.

March 16, 2005: The krausen was on top of the wort most of the day. It fell back into the wort during the evening. The airlock is bubbling once per second.

March 17, 2005: The airlock bubbles once every 12-14 seconds.

March 24, 2005: The airlock bubbles once every 42 seconds.

May 14, 2005: Racked the stout and bottled it. Ended up with 38 12-ounce bottles. I was surprised to see that I ended up with just under 4 gallons of beer since I had started with 7 gallons of wort before the 90 minute boil. The long boil guaranteed a high starting gravity. The high ending gravity is going to ensure a nice balance to the strength of the alcohol. This stout has roughly 67 IBU in bitterness.

February 21, 2007: I shared some of the last few bottles of the brew over the past weekend. It has matured quite well. There is a pleasant balance between the richness of the malt, the warmth of the alcohol and the remaining bitterness of the hops. Everyone who sampled the stout enjoyed it.

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Papazian, Charlie. The Complete Joy of Home Brewing, 3rd Edition. HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 2003; ISBN 0060531053

Unger, Richard W. Beer in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004; ISBN 0812237951

Best, Michael R., ed. The English Housewife by Gervase Markham. McGill-Queen's University Press, 1986, 1998, 2003; ISBN 0773511032

Online Resources:

Beer Judge Certification Program (BJCP) Style Guidelines
<http://www.bjcp.org/styles04/Category13.html#style13F>

Imperial Russian Stout
<http://www.allaboutbeer.com/features/231russianstout.html>

[Another example of good documentation:](#)

Apricot Wine

June 26, 2005
(recipe for 1 gallon)

Ingredients:

Step 1:

5 pounds of fresh apricots
7 cups of water
2 cups of sugar
1 cup of warm water
1 teaspoon of sugar
1 packet of Red Star's Cotes de Blancs dry wine yeast

Step 2:

2 cups of water
2 cups of sugar

Step 3:

2 cups of white grape juice (Stater Bros brand, ingredients: filtered water, grape juice concentrate, grape juice, citric acid, ascorbic acid (vitamin C), potassium metabisulfite added to maintain flavor and freshness)
1/2 cup of water
1/4 cup of sugar

OG: not taken

FG: 1.012 (originally 1.010 @ 78 degrees F)

Procedure:

Step 1:

Rinse off five pounds of fresh apricots. Cut each apricot open, removing the stone, stem, and any leaves. Place the apricots in the freezer for three days. Remove the apricots from the freezer and allow them to completely defrost. Mash the apricots with a fork.

Make a yeast starter by combining 1 cup of warm water and 1 teaspoon of sugar in a pint glass. Stir for a couple of minutes to dissolve the sugar. Add a packet of Cotes de Blancs dry wine yeast. Stir again, breaking up any clumps that might form. Set aside.

The apricot mush measured 6 3/4 cups. Pour the apricot mush, 7 cups of water, 2 cups of sugar, and the yeast starter into a gallon jug. The volume should reach just past the shoulder of the jug. Swirl the contents of the jug gently for a minute to mix. Add an airlock and set aside.

Step 2:

After a week, rack the wine. Dissolve 2 cups of sugar in 2 cups of water and add to the wine. Re-attach the airlock and set aside.

Step 3:

Bulk age the wine for a year. Rack the wine. Add 2 cups of white grape juice. Dissolve 1/4 cup of sugar in 1/2 cup of water. Add the syrup to the wine. Re-attach the airlock and set aside.

Notes:

June 26, 2005: The apricot mush was too thick to juice, so I threw everything together in a gallon jug. Fermentation started within three hours. There are pieces of apricot pulp already floating at the top of the must. I am afraid the pulp will enter the airlock and pop it off the top of the jug.

June 27, 2005: My fears were realized this morning. The apricot pulp completely filled the neck of the jug, pushing the airlock off. A couple large blobs of pulp streamed its way down the jug. I cleaned up the airlock and place it back on the jug.

Eight hours later the pulp pushed the airlock off again. I removed about a tablespoon of the pulp from the jug, stirred the must well, and replaced the airlock. The airlock is bubbling 2-3 times per second.

June 28, 2005: The airlock is bubbling once every 2 seconds.

July 2, 2005: The apricot pulp has formed a cap about three inches thick at the top of the must. I see no activity in the airlock. I gently swirled the contents of the jug to break up the cap.

July 3, 2005: Racked the wine. The wine had fermented to complete dryness: 0.996 (originally 0.994 @ 78 degrees F). The wine has a wonderful apricot aroma and flavor. I added the simple syrup to provide the sweetness that I think is needed to bring out the apricot flavor. The Specific Gravity of the must after adding the simple syrup was 1.040 (originally 1.038 @ 78 degrees F). I expect fermentation to re-start within a day.

July 4, 2005: The airlock now bubbles once every 23 seconds.

July 7, 2005: The airlock is bubbling once every 10 seconds.

July 8, 2005: The airlock is bubbling once every 15 seconds.

July 17, 2005: Racked the wine. The specific gravity was 1.000 (originally 0.998 @ 80 degrees F). The wine is cloudy. It has a light tan color. The aroma and flavor are both dominated by the presence of apricots. The taste of alcohol is present only in the aftertaste. The dry flavor needs a hint of sweetness to balance the fruit flavor.

August 24, 2006: I found the airlock has been dry for an unknown period of time. The wine is too dry. It tastes more like a cider, which might come from the white sugar. There is very little presence of apricots in the aroma and flavor. The body of the wine is very water. I added 2 cups of white grape juice to lighten the flavor and to add a little body. I added a little additional sugar to sweeten the wine, to make it more enjoyable.

July 20, 2008: Racked the wine. The final gravity was 1.012 (originally 1.010 @ 78 degrees F). The wine has a soft, fruit flavor. I filled and corked 4 750 ml bottles.

Historical Notes:

The apricot or "apricock" is a stone fruit, or drupe, that belongs to the Prunus (rose) family. It is related to almonds, cherries, peaches and plums. Apricots are native to China, where they were cultivated as far back as 2000 B.C.E. They arrived in the Mediterranean area, via Persia and Greece, by the first century C.E. Egypt became known for twenty-one different varieties of apricots.

A plethora of recipes exist for preserving and cooking with apricots (Martha Washington's *Booke of Cookery* (late 16th, early 17th century), Elinor Fettiplace's *Receipt Book* (1604), Ladie Borlase's *Receiptes Booke* (dated to 1655), *The Closet of Sir Kenelm Digby Knight Opened* (1669), *The Queen-like Closet or Rich Cabinet* (1672), *The Accomplisht Cook* (1685)).

I have been able to locate only one periodish recipe for apricot wine. This recipe for "Apricocke Wine" appears at the end of Elinor Fettiplace's *Receipt Book*, but in a hand different than Lady Fettiplace (possibly her daughter-in-law or niece):

TO MAKE APRICOCKE WINE

Take 3 pound of sugar, & 3 quarts of water, let them boile together & take off ye scum when it ariseth, put in 6 pounds of Apricocks pared & stoned let them boil till they be tender then take them up, & when ye liquor is cold bottel it, you may if you please let ye liquor have one warm, with a sprigg or two or flowered clary when ye Apricocks are taken up; it gives it a flavour, ye Apricocks make a good service for yor tables for present spending.

Cindy Renfrow's *A Sip Through Time* lists two apricot wine recipes from the 18th and 19th centuries are very close to the one listed above.

I was inspired to make an apricot wine by a recipe in M. A. Jagendorf's *Folk Wines, Cordials & Brandies*:

2 gallons of water
3 to 4 pounds of sugar
15 to 25 pounds of fresh apricots
1/2 ounce yeast (2 packages)

Put the water into an enamel vessel holding 4 gallons. Dissolve the sugar in the water. Take ripe, sound apricots (the more apricots used, the richer the wine), wash them thoroughly, cut them into small pieces, and add them to the water. Break up about half the apricot pits and put pits and the kernels into the water. Add another quart of water and set the whole mixture on the fire. Keep it boiling from one to two hours. Strain the liquid through a cloth into a crock and let it cool down. When it is lukewarm, dissolve the yeast in 1/2 cup warm water and pour it in. Cover the crock, but it in a warm place, and let it ferment. This will take from ten to twenty-one days. When the violent fermentation has stopped, strain the wine off into glass jars or gallons and let it rest for a week or more to clear. If it is not clear by then, fine it, rack it again if necessary, and then bottle it.

I was gifted with five pounds of very ripe homegrown apricots. I was afraid of a cloudy wine if I boiled the apricots, so I froze and mushed them. I also did not add any of the apricot kernels, which contain cyanogens. The kernels release hydrocyanic acid (which is highly poisonous) when crushed.

Bibliography:

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Tannahill, Reay. *Food in History*. Penguin Books, 1973, 1988; ISBN10 014010206X, ISBN13 9780140102062

The Queen-like Closet or Rich Cabinet, by Hannah Wolley (1672)
<http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/14377>