

# Pa Larkin's Home-brewed Apple Cider Recipe

Don't waste all those windfalls, make your own cider using Pa's easy, five-step recipe...

## Stage One: Source your apples...

If a fresh stash is not so readily available near you try hitting the farmers markets or supermarket. The basic rule is that you need four times the volume of apples for the volume of cider you hope to make. So if you fill a 22-litre (5-gallon) bin with apples, you are likely to get around five or so litres of cider. You can use any apples, but the best cider is made from a mixture of sweet, eating and sour varieties.

## Stage Two: Juice the apples...

To make cider, you need to crush some apples, and let the juice ferment (go off a bit!) until it becomes fizzy and alcoholic. It's that simple but to make it well you need to follow a few rules and buy some basic equipment.

In the Larkin house we use a wooden press to squeeze juice from apple pulp, but if speed is more important to you use an electric juicer which should take you about half an hour to get through 25kg of apples.



## Stage Three: Decant your juice...

You need to decant your juice into a sterilized barrel as you go along. Just make sure you sterilize everything first with a food-grade sterilizer, just swish it around your containers to make them super-hygienic.

## Stage Four: Fermentation...

Once you have your juice, you need to strain it through muslin, into a demijohn. Add a crushed Campden tablet which is used by home brewers to kill bacteria.

Then, you leave the juice in the demijohn with the lid loosely closed. You can add special brewing yeast to get the fermentation going. The natural yeasts in the air mean that, within a couple of days, you'll have a frothing mixture. After a week, strain the liquid into a fresh demijohn, and within another week you'll have a beautifully sparkling, slightly cloudy drink.

## Stage Five: Bottling...

You should always let cider ferment for two weeks before you bottle it, that way the fermentation will have reached an end and you don't have bottles explode on opening. You'll be able to see that the bubbles are forming very slowly as opposed to fizzing, and the cider will taste dry. Pop in another Campden tablet, too, which will help ensure fermentation is complete, and then bottle your golden nectar, again through a muslin-lined funnel, and use a capper to seal the bottles.