



Asia Cider Championship – Style Guidelines Including Mead (*Category 8*)

Please find below the cider style guidelines for the 2024 Asia Cider Championship. As the regional cider market continues to evolve these style guidelines have been developed to allow creativity in cidermaking, as such, please ensure that you include any additional cidermakers notes when completing your registrations so judges can make fair assessments of competition samples.

Category 1: Modern Cider

An alcoholic beverage for which the primary fermentable sugar source comes from apples (apple juice/concentrate).

Overall Impression: A pleasant, refreshing acidity is a driving characteristic usually balanced with a fruity apple sweetness. A modern Cider can be made using either traditional cider apples, culinary apples or dessert apples.

Aroma: Medium to high acidity, floral, apple aromas. Ciders that are intentionally sweet or Low-Alcohol may have more prominent sweet apple aroma and flavours. Dryer ciders may be more wine-like with some esters.

Flavour: A crisp/sharp acidity balanced with a fruit sweetness to provide a refreshing character. Acidity should not be harsh or biting.

Appearance: Pale copper to yellow in colour, usually clear (brilliant) but a slight haze is permitted. Where apple pectin has left for additional body and flavour the colour may be considerably more hazy. There should be no discolouration from oxidation.

Mouthfeel: Light to medium body, there will be a fuller mouthfeel where the cider has remained unfiltered with a pectin based haze. The mouthfeel may feel fuller if the cider has been back sweetened.

Other Comments: A modern cider should be refreshing with apple driven characteristics, not watery or bland. No other fruit or flavour additions are permitted apart from apple. Back sweetening is permitted.

Entry Notes: Entrants **MUST** declare sweetness & carbonation levels.

Sweetness parameters:

Dry – FG of 1.002 or lower

Medium – FG of between 1.003 – 1.014

Sweet – FG of over 1.014

ABV: 3.5 – 8.0%

Carbonation: None / Low / Sparkling (High)

Category 2: Fruit Cider

Apple cider with other fruit(s) or fruit juices added.

Note: Fruit flavours should compliment the natural apple flavour to enter in this category, where the additions dominate the base cider products should be entered into the Flavoured Cider category

Overall Impression: Made using either traditional cider apples, culinary apples or dessert apples a Fruit Cider should harmoniously combine the flavours of the apple and the added fruit so that both are perceivable in the final product.

Aroma: Fruit ciders often display the aroma characteristics of their fruit additions married with the base cider's apple characters

Flavour: Flavour will depend on the fruit added, however these additions should work in harmony with the base cider, not completely dominate it. The result should be a refreshing combination of apple and fruit. Oxidation is considered a flavour fault.

Appearance: Clear to hazy, depending on fruit additions. If a colour is intended it should be appropriate for the fruit added, brilliant and not oxidized (dull/discoloured).

Mouthfeel: Light to medium. May be slightly tannic depending on additions.

Entry Notes: Entrants MUST declare sweetness & carbonation levels. Entrants MUST declare fruit(s)/fruit juice additions

Sweetness parameters:

Dry – FG of 1.002 or lower

Medium – FG of between 1.003 – 1.014

Sweet – FG of over 1.014

ABV: 3.5 – 9.0%

Carbonation: None / Low / Sparkling (High)

Category 3: Herb/Spiced Cider

Cider with herbs and/or spices added complimenting the natural apple flavour of the base cider

Note: The herb and/or spice flavours should compliment the natural apple flavour to enter in this category, where the additions dominate the base cider products should be entered into the “Flavoured Cider” category

Overall Impression: Made using either traditional cider apples, culinary apples or dessert apples. The botanicals added should harmoniously combine with the flavours of the apple in a way that compliments the base cider. Neither the added herb or spice or the apple should dominate the other.

Aroma: Herb/spiced ciders often display the aroma characteristics of their botanical additions married with the base cider’s apple characters.

Flavour: Flavour will depend on the herb(s) and/or spice(s) added, however these additions should work in harmony with the base cider, not completely dominate it. The result should be a refreshing combination of apple and botanical.

Appearance: Pale copper to yellow in colour, usually clear (brilliant) but a slight haze is permitted. Where pectin/yeast based haze remains for additional body and flavour the colour may be considerably more hazy. Where the botanicals have not added colour to the base cider there should be no discolouration from oxidation.

Mouthfeel: Light to medium body, there will be a fuller mouthfeel where pectin based haze remains.

Entry Notes: Entrants MUST declare sweetness & carbonation levels. Entrants MUST declare Herb/Spice additions. If hops have been used entrants should declare the variety/varieties used.

Sweetness parameters:

Dry – FG of 1.002 or lower

Medium – FG of between 1.003 – 1.014

Sweet – FG of over 1.014

ABV: 3.5 – 9.0%

Carbonation: None / Low / Sparkling (High)

Category 4: Wood/Barrel-Aged Cider

This category includes ciders that have spent time fermenting and/or aging in wood barrels or on wood chips/cubes.

Overall Impression: The impact of the time wood/barrel-aging should be discernible in the final cider, often adding oaky/woody/sherry characteristics. If the wood holds the flavour of another liquid (such as wine, sherry, whisky or beer) then these characters should be evident and marry well with the base cider. Flavour imparted by the barrel may be subtle or strong.

Aroma: The cider character must be present and must combine harmoniously with the characters of the wood/barrel.

Flavour: Apple flavours must be present and must combine harmoniously with the characters of the wood/barrel.

Appearance: Slight haze to clear (brilliant) ranging from yellow to pale copper. Wood/Barrel aging may contribute additional colour.

Mouthfeel: Light to medium, may display slight astringent (tannic) notes.

Entry Notes: Entrants MUST declare carbonation levels. Entrants MUST declare Wood/Barrel-Aging conditions

Sweetness parameters:

There are no sweetness parameters for this style

ABV: 3.5 – 10.0%

Carbonation: None / Low / Sparkling (High)

Category 5: Specialty Cider

This 'open' category is designed to capture varieties of cider that may not otherwise fit into other competition categories

Overall Impression: Varies depending on style & additions

Aroma: Varies depending on style & additions

Flavour: Varies depending on style & additions

Appearance: Varies depending on style & additions

Mouthfeel: Varies depending on style & additions

Other Comments: Judges will assess entries based on the information provided during product registration and their own professional experience

Entry Notes: Entrants MUST provide a style description and declare their intentions when producing this cider. Entrants MUST provide carbonation levels.

Sweetness parameters:

There are no sweetness parameters for this class

ABV: 3.0 – 10.0%

Carbonation: None / Low / Sparkling (High)

Category 6: Flavoured Cider

Flavoured ciders are those where the flavour added is intended to dominate the flavours of the base cider

Overall Impression: Made using either traditional cider apples, culinary apples or dessert apples a Flavoured Cider will display the flavour characteristics of whatever has been added to the base cider. The cider is often used as an alcoholic base with strong flavours added in the form of (but not limited to) raw fruit, fruit juice, fruit concentrate, spice or other botanicals. The flavours added will often dominate the apple flavour of the base cider to a level that it may not be perceivable in the final product.

Aroma: Varies depending on additions. Can often be very sweet.

Flavour: Varies depending on additions, flavour additions are permitted to dominate the base cider

Appearance: Varies depending on additions

Mouthfeel: Light to full bodied, depending on additions

Other Comments: If the cider is more of a balance of apple and additional flavours then the producer should consider entering the Fruit Cider or Herb/Spiced Cider category

Entry Notes: Entrants MUST declare sweetness & carbonation levels. Entrants MUST declare any flavour and/or colour additions

Sweetness parameters:

Dry – FG of 1.002 or lower

Medium – FG of between 1.003 – 1.014

Sweet – FG of over 1.014

ABV: 3.5 – 9.0%

Carbonation: None / Low / Sparkling (High)

Category 7: Perry/Pear Cider

This category encompasses Perry made from traditional "perry pears" (such as Barland, Thorn or Yellow Huffcap) as well as pear 'cider' made from culinary or dessert pears.

Overall Impression: A refreshing pear flavour, varying from light bodied 'champaign' style to slightly sweeter and fuller bodied. Traditional Perry's will display more astringency with pear 'ciders' more sweetness.

Aroma: Pear characters with floral and citrus aromas.

Flavour: Pear with some possible hints of bitterness especially in the case of traditional perry's. Flavour additions (i.e. fruit/spice) are permitted

Appearance: Clear to slightly hazy, golden to pale straw. Colour may change if there are ingredient additions

Mouthfeel: Expect a medium to low body with possible evident tannins. Pear ciders may be more towards the medium bodied.

Entry Notes: Entrants MUST declare sweetness & carbonation levels.

Sweetness parameters:

Dry – FG of less than 1.002

Medium – FG of between 1.003 – 1.019

Sweet – FG of over 1.020

ABV: 3.5 – 10.0%

Carbonation: None / Low / Sparkling (High)

MEAD

Category 8: Mead

This category Mead (also known as hydromel, particularly when low in alcohol content), is an alcoholic beverage made by fermenting honey mixed with water, and sometimes with added ingredients such as fruits, spices, grains, or hops. The alcoholic content ranges from about 3.5% ABV to more than 18%. The defining characteristic of mead is that the majority of the beverage's fermentable sugar is derived from honey. It may be still, carbonated, or naturally sparkling; dry, semi-sweet, or sweet.

When assessing mead judges will consider the sweetness, mouthfeel, carbonation and alcoholic strength as well as the impact on flavour of the honey used and any additional special ingredients (fruits, herbs, spices ... etc). Some minor adjustments in acidity and tannin to any variety of mead can be made with citrus fruits, tea, or chemicals, however these additives should not be readily discernible in flavour or aroma. Yeast nutrients may be used but should not be detected. Oak aging is allowable in any category as a subtle to noticeable level, but excessive oak is a fault.

This category consists of 2 styles of mead

- **Modern Mead**
- **Flavoured Mead**

Modern Mead can be light to full bodied, but is produced primarily from honey, water and yeast – there should be no discernible flavours derived from any other ingredients.

Flavoured Mead covers any variety of mead that has been produced with flavour additions such as, but not limited to, fruits, herbs and spices

8A. Modern Mead

Ingredients: Mead consists primarily of honey, water, and yeast. Minor acidity and tannin adjustments can be made using citrus fruits, tea, or chemicals, but these should not dominate flavour or aroma. Yeast nutrients are permissible if undetectable. Oak aging is allowed, provided it enhances without overwhelming the mead.

Appearance: Should display good to brilliant clarity. Crystal clear meads with a bright, distinct meniscus are ideal. Observable particulates are undesirable. Carbonation should form a short-lasting head, with smaller bubbles being more desirable. The colour can range from almost clear to dark brown based on honey variety – judges will consider hue, saturation, and purity. Higher strength meads may be more viscous and show signs of body, but carbonation may affect this perception.

Aroma: The intensity of the honey aroma will vary based upon the sweetness and strength of the mead. If a honey variety is declared the mead should display characteristics of this. Aromatics may include fruity, floral, or spicy notes, with a clean, fresh fermentation character preferred. A complex bouquet is a positive attribute. Avoid phenolic, harsh, chemical, or overly oxidized aromas. Alcohol notes should be smooth, not hot or solvent-like. Overall, the aroma should be harmonious and enticing.

Flavour: Honey flavour intensity will vary with sweetness and strength. Honey characters should be recognizable if declared. Residual sweetness should match the mead's style (dry, semi-sweet, sweet) without being syrupy or cloying. Additives like acid and tannin should enhance balance without being excessive. Avoid artificial, harsh, or bitter flavours. A lingering aftertaste is desirable. Complexity and depth are positive attributes, alcohol flavours

should be well-aged. Light oxidation may be acceptable but avoid excessive sherry-like or papery notes. Aging should smooth and blend flavours.

Mouthfeel: Should display an elegant wine-like character with body varying from medium-light to medium-full, increasing with sweetness and strength. Body should not be thin or overly cloying. Sweetness, strength, and carbonation levels should be in tandem with the style of mead produced (dry, medium or sweet). Natural acidity and low levels of astringency can balance the overall profile. Carbonation levels can range from still to highly carbonated, enhancing acidity and providing a "bite." A warming alcohol presence is permissible, smoothing with age.

Overall Impression: A well-made mead balances honey flavours, sweetness, acidity, tannins, and alcohol. Strength, sweetness, and age influence the presentation.

Special instructions

Entrants MUST specify

- Carbonation Level (still; lightly carbonated; sparkling or highly carbonated)

- Strength Level (light, standard or strong)

- Sweetness Level (dry, semi-sweet/medium, sweet)

Minor differences from stated levels will not be heavily penalized or be considered a disqualifying fault.

Vital Statistics (for competition entry)

OG: 1.035 – 1.170

ABV: 3.5 – 18%

FG: Dry: 0.990 – 1.050

Full Vital Statistics

OG		ABV		FG	
Light	:	1.035 – 1.080	Light:	3.5 – 7.5%	Light/dry: 0.990 – 1.010
Standard:		1.080 – 1.120	Standard:	7.5 – 14.0%	Standard/Semi-sweet: 1.010 – 1.025
Strong:		1.120 – 1.170	Strong:	14.0 – 18.0%	Strong/Sweet: 1.025 – 1.050

8B. Flavoured Mead

Ingredients: Flavouring in the form of (but not limited to) fruits, herbs and spices are added to the base mead which consists primarily of honey, water, and yeast. Minor acidity and tannin adjustments can be made using citrus fruits, tea, or chemicals, but these should not dominate flavour or aroma unless they are intended to. Yeast nutrients are permissible if undetectable. Oak aging is allowed, provided it enhances without overwhelming the mead.

Appearance: Should display good to brilliant clarity. Crystal clear meads with a bright, distinct meniscus are ideal. Observable particulates are undesirable. Carbonation should form a short-lasting head, with smaller bubbles being more desirable. The colour can range across the colour spectrum but should reflect the colour of the additions (if any) and should not be dull. Judges will consider hue, saturation, and purity. Higher strength meads may be more viscous and show signs of body, but carbonation may affect this perception.

Aroma: The intensity of the honey aroma and flavour additions will vary based upon the sweetness and strength of the mead. The mead should display the characteristics of any fruits, herbs, spices ... etc ... used and they should balance well with the sweet honey aromas. Aromatics may include a range of flavours derived from the additions. A clean, fresh fermentation character preferred. A complex bouquet is a positive attribute. Avoid phenolic, harsh, chemical, or overly oxidized aromas. Alcohol notes should be smooth, not hot or solvent-like. Overall, the aroma should be harmonious and enticing.

Flavour: Should faithfully reflect the flavour additions with intensity often varying with the sweetness and strength of the base mead. Honey characters should be recognizable if declared. Residual sweetness should match the mead's style (dry, semi-sweet, sweet) without being syrupy or cloying. The flavour additions may either balance or dominate the natural mead flavours depending on the meadmakers targeted flavour profile. Avoid artificial, harsh, or bitter flavours. A lingering aftertaste is desirable. Complexity and depth are positive attributes, alcohol flavours should be well-aged. Light oxidation may be acceptable but avoid excessive sherry-like or papery notes. Aging should smooth and blend flavours.

Mouthfeel: Body may vary from medium-light to medium-full depending on flavour additions, increasing with sweetness and strength. Body should not be thin or overly cloying. Sweetness, strength, and carbonation levels

should be in tandem with the style of mead produced (dry, medium or sweet). Natural acidity and low levels of astringency can balance the overall profile. Carbonation levels can range from still to highly carbonated, enhancing acidity and providing a "bite." A warming alcohol presence is permissible, smoothing with age.

Overall Impression: A well-made flavoured mead balances honey flavours, sweetness, acidity, tannins, and alcohol with the flavour additions. However, dominant flavours from fruit, spice, herb, hop ... etc .. additions are not considered a major fault if this was the aim of the meadmaker. Strength, sweetness, and age influence the presentation.

Special instructions

Entrants MUST specify

- Carbonation Level (still; lightly carbonated; sparkling or highly carbonated)
- Strength Level (light, standard or strong)
- Sweetness Level (dry, semi-sweet/medium, sweet)

Minor differences from stated levels will not be heavily penalized or be considered a disqualifying fault.

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OG: 1.035 – 1.170

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OG		ABV		FG	
Light	:	1.035 – 1.080	Light:	3.5 – 7.5%	Light/dry: 0.990 – 1.010
Standard:		1.080 – 1.120	Standard:	7.5 – 14.0%	Standard/Semi-sweet: 1.010 – 1.025
Strong:		1.120 – 1.170	Strong:	14.0 – 18.0%	Strong/Sweet: 1.025 – 1.050