

Apple Cider: A Fall Favorite

A glass of cold apple cider or a mug of hot cider is a fall treat this time of year!

People have been enjoying cider since at least 55 BC, when Romans arrived in England and found locals drinking a cider-like liquid. Later, English settlers introduced cider to American by bringing apple seeds specifically for cider production.

In the United States, fermented alcoholic apple juice is called “hard cider,” while freshly pressed, non-alcoholic cider is called “sweet cider.” Cider is made from fermenting apple juice, which relies on natural yeast present in the apples for fermenting.

Fresh or unpasteurized apple juice or cider can cause food borne illness from bacteria, such as *E. coli 0157:H7* or Salmonella. Harmful bacteria must be killed by a pasteurization process prior to drinking the cider.

To pasteurize, heat cider to at least 160 degrees Fahrenheit, 185 degrees Fahrenheit at most. Measure the actual temperature with a cooking thermometer. It will taste less ‘cooked’ if it is not boiled. Skim off the foam that may have developed and pour the hot cider into heated, clean and sanitized plastic containers or glass jars. Refrigerate immediately.

To freeze, pour hot cider into plastic or glass freezer container, leaving 1/2-inch headspace for expansion. Refrigerate until cool and then place in the freezer.