

BEE MY HONEY

“My son, eat honey because it is good, and the honeycomb which is sweet to your taste.” (Proverbs 24:13)

Honey is a sweet, natural, unrefined food made by bees using nectar from flowers. Honey bees change the nectar into honey by a process of regurgitation and store it in wax honeycombs inside the beehive. 60,000 or so bees in a beehive may collectively travel as much as 55,000 miles and visit more than two million flowers to gather enough nectar to make just one pound of honey!

Today, honey is a popular choice for those who want to replace refined sugar with a natural sweetener, but it can also be used in various medicinal treatments. It has been used to heal burns and wounds without infection because bacteria cannot live in honey. Some doctors today recommend the use of honey in certain situations because it is said to be non-irritating, non-toxic, self-sterile, bactericidal, nutritive, cheap, easily obtainable, easily applied and effective. Customers often come to Grandma's Pantry and ask for local honey because it helps immunize hay fever sufferers against their allergies.

Honey is a pure unprocessed food that is 99% predigested and made up of natural sugars (dextrose and levulose). Honey contains vitamins (thiamine, riboflavin, and ascorbic acid) as well as minerals (iron, copper, potassium and magnesium) which are not found in regular sugar.

Flavors of honey vary based on the nectar source, and various types and grades of honey are available for use today. Did you know that there are over 300 types of honey found in the United States? Only a small percentage of these are popular today. Honey is normally bought and sold in one of two ways - by variety or by color. The variety of honey depends on the flower source of the honey and the color of honey determines its flavor: the darker the honey, the stronger and more robust the flavor and the lighter the color the milder and lighter the flavor.

Honey also comes in different forms. Raw honey is not heated above 95 degrees, a temperature that kills any yeast or other microorganisms present. It

also has not been passed through a filter. Filtered honey is honey of any type that has been filtered to the extent that all or most of the fine particles, pollen grains, air bubbles, or other materials normally found in suspension, have been removed. The process typically heats honey to 150–170 °F to more easily pass through the filter. Filtered honey is very clear and will not crystallize as quickly. Comb honey is honey in its original form, that is, honey inside of the honeycomb. (The beeswax comb is edible). Cut comb honey is liquid honey that has added chunks of the honey comb in the jar. Pasteurized honey is honey that has been heated in a pasteurization process. Pasteurization destroys yeast cells and it also liquefies any microcrystals in the honey, which delays the onset of crystallization. However, excessive heat exposure also results in product deterioration and affects the appearance (darkens the natural honey color) and taste.

Honey should be stored in a closed container in a dry place. Generally, honey should not be refrigerated. Refrigeration will cause the honey to granulate quicker (which does not spoil the honey) and some people believe that improves the flavor and makes the honey easier to handle. You can decide which you prefer.

Honey can generally be used in place of sugar in most recipes but may need some adjustments. It is recommended that an equal amount of honey replace the sugar but reduce the liquid by $\frac{1}{4}$ cup for each cup of honey used. In baked goods, add one-half teaspoon of baking soda for every cup of honey used and reduce the temperature by twenty-five degrees. (Since honey is believed to be sweeter than sugar, some people prefer to use less honey per measure when substituting).

Here's a recipe using honey for Oatmeal Cookies-

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup honey*
- 1 egg, slightly beaten
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. vanilla*
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt*
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup whole wheat flour*
- $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp. baking powder*
- 1 cup wheat germ*
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup rolled oats*
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup raisins*
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped nuts*

*Products available at Grandma's Pantry.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Cream together the butter and honey.

Add egg, vanilla and salt - beat well.

Stir flour, baking powder, wheat germ and oats together with a fork.

Blend well with other ingredients, adding a tablespoon of water if necessary to hold mixture together.

Place, by tablespoonful, on greased cookie sheet. Flatten slightly.

Bake 10-12 minutes. Makes about three dozen.

We hope you will enjoy this recipe.

Come visit us at Grandma's Pantry in Harrisonburg, VA or shop online at www.GrandmasPantryVa.com.

***"So, whatever you eat or drink, or whatever you do,
do all to the glory of God." (1 Cor. 10:31)***