

WEED ALL ABOUT US

Your Kamloops Garden Club Newsletter
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Have a fun, memorable summer! See you Sept 23, 2026~~~~

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**THE ONLY REASON
FOR BEING A BEE
THAT I KNOW OF
IS MAKING HONEY.**

-Winnie the Pooh,
character in *Winnie
the Pooh* by A. A.
Milne, English writer
(1882-1956)

Winnie the Pooh loved it. The Beatles sang about it. After he died, Alexander the Great was preserved in it. As one of the oldest foods, honey can be eaten raw, from the comb, creamed, or whipped. You can choose from several colors—white, light, or a shade of amber—and 300 or so varieties, including acacia, alfalfa, clover, lavender, macadamia, orange blossom, and tupelo. Honey is produced around the world, from New Zealand to Ukraine. In the U.S., North Dakota produces the most: 38.3 million pounds in 2023.

As depicted in 15,000-year-old cave paintings, people have been harvesting honey for millennia. Serious honey production probably began about 3,500 years ago. According to a study published in *Nature*, honey may have helped *Homo sapiens* evolve: “Honey is energetically dense and easy to consume and digest and thus may



HONEY IN THE OVEN

Try substituting honey for sugar when baking your favorite recipes.

- For every cup of sugar, use $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of honey.
- For every cup of honey used, reduce other liquids by $\frac{1}{4}$ cup. In recipes without other liquids or recipes that call for eggs, increase the amount of flour by 2 tablespoons for each cup of honey used.
- A tiny bit of acidity can help balance honey's sweetness. Add a squeeze of lemon juice or a dash of vinegar to round out the flavors, especially in sweeter desserts.
- Reduce the oven temperature by 25°F. Honey caramelizes more quickly than granulated sugar, so turning down the heat prevents baked goods from browning too fast. Keep an eye on baking times in case they need adjustment, too.

have contributed to potential links between nutrition and neural expansion of the enlarging hominin brain.”

Rightly or wrongly, for centuries, honey has been said to cure earaches, gout, hair loss, snake bites, and sore eyes and—according to the Reverend Charles Butler in his *Feminine Monarchy, or the History of Bees* (1609)—can be used as an aphrodisiac. John Hill's *The Virtues of Honey in Preventing Many of the Worst Disorders; and in the Certain Cure of Several Others* (1759) was the first book in English to focus on its healing properties.

Long before that, Hippocrates, aka the father of medicine, recommended it as a cure for carbuncles. In China and India, people started using honey to treat ailments and diseases thousands of years ago. According to archaeologist and beekeeper Gil Stein, “Honey was considered an almost magical substance in the ancient Near East. People used it for everything: as a food and as a raw material to make alcoholic beverages like mead and honey wine.” Stein says it was the most common ingredient in ancient medicine in Mesopotamia and Egypt, and “they even used it for mummification.”

BEE HEALED

Honey's medicinal powers are not just the stuff of folklore. In recent decades, scientists have explored its potential to treat antibiotic-resistant infections, herpes, and COVID-19. It's being studied as a treatment for major health problems—breast cancer, heart disease, osteoporosis—and less life-threatening ones, too, like conjunctivitis, heartburn, menopause symptoms, allergies, and even gingivitis. Before antibiotics, honey was commonly used to dress wounds, and recent research indicates that New Zealand's manuka honey, processed as “medical-grade,” seems to be effective for that purpose.

“Honey is well known for its health benefits, having antibacterial, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antimutagenic, anticarcinogenic, and bacteriostatic qualities,” stated a 2024 *Food Chemistry* article, a review of numerous studies. Honey, it stated, “can be utilized in new



HONEY LOVE

The word honey seeped into the language of love long ago, first appearing in print as a term of endearment in 1375, according to *The Oxford English Dictionary*. We'll never know why some medieval wooer decided to whisper that sweet nothing into a beloved's ear, but the obvious explanation is that honey is sweet. Six centuries later, it popped up in movie titles and songs, such as *Honey, I Shrank the Kids* and "Sugar, Sugar," the Archies' 1968 bubblegum pop masterpiece with the immortal lyrics, "Ah, sugar, ah, honey, honey. You are my candy girl. And you've got me wanting you."

treatments without causing the side effects that frequently go along with the use of synthetic chemical drugs."

Before swapping out amoxicillin for the sweet stuff, bear in mind that much about honey's medical potential remains to be determined. Because it may contain bacteria that cause infant botulism, honey should never be given to children younger than a year old.

TASTY AS CAN BEE

When you slip a spoonful of honey into your tea, you're reaping the bounty of 5,000 apian visits to flowers. On those visits, the bee collects nectar and carries it in its crop (honey stomach) to the hive. There, the bee expels the nectar into the mouth of another bee, a process that is repeated from one bee to the next until the nectar has thickened enough to be transferred to the honeycomb's storage cells. As part of the complex honey-making process, bees collectively fan their wings to evaporate the nectar's water content.

Of around 30,000 species of bees worldwide (about 5,000 in North America), less than 4 percent are honey producers. The one we rely on for honey (and for pollinating commercial crops), *Apis mellifera*, originated in the Middle East or Northeastern Africa and is now found everywhere except Antarctica. Honeybees are among the 3 percent of bees that live in colonies—most bees are ground-dwellers and build solitary nests. (Another distinguishing characteristic, according to apian authority Eric Mussen: "hairy eyes.") *(continued)*



HOT TODDY

This age-old remedy can help you fall asleep, especially if you've got a cold or the flu. To make a child's toddy, replace whiskey with 1 teaspoon of lemon juice.

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup boiling water
2 teaspoons honey
2 tablespoons
whiskey or bourbon
1 lemon slice
1 cinnamon stick
ground nutmeg,
for topping (optional)

■ In a mug, combine water and honey. Stir until honey is dissolved. Add whiskey, lemon, and cinnamon stick. Let sit for 2 to 3 minutes, then remove lemon and cinnamon stick. Sprinkle with nutmeg, if using, and serve.

Makes 1 serving.



Panacea or not, honey is an indisputable staple in pantries everywhere, esteemed for its ability to add flavor to a cup of tea, bowl of yogurt, or stack of pancakes. Apples dipped in honey are front-and-center at Rosh Hashanah seders, as is honey-glazed ham at Easter dinners. During Ramadan, many a Muslim's evening meal ends with honey-drenched baklava.

A century ago in Madison, Wisconsin, Malitta D. Fischer promoted her approach to cooking with honey in her restaurant, the Honey Tea Room, and in *Honey Way Menus*. The 1926 book gave recipes for Honey Hospitality Salad, Honey Way Halibut, and a Honey Peanut Butter Lettuce Sandwich "suitable for evening card parties, missionary society gatherings, [and] sewing clubs." At about the same time, Honey Maid graham crackers appeared in grocery stores and went on to dominate the market.

Less than 100 years later, hot honey, made from honey, chilies, and vinegar, became all the rage. In 2024, Julia Moskin wrote in *The New York Times*, "In a world gone mad for condiments, hot honey is king."

Apparently, honey itself is virtually immortal, discovered unspoiled in pots in ancient Egyptian tombs. According to scientist Amina Harris, "As long as the lid stays on it and no water is added to it, honey will not go bad."

Honey—truly a food for posterity. ■

Faye Wolfe wouldn't be without a jar of honey in her kitchen.