

Show me the Honey!

There are literally hundreds of kinds of honey in the world; different farms produce different flavoured honey depending on what kind of nectar their bees collect.

And there are even more types of bee in the world, some bees are in greater demand because they are said to make the best honey. So how would you judge which honey is the best?

Honey is generally split into two categories:

- Mono floral honey
- Poly floral honey

Mono floral honey is when nectar from one particular kind of flower is collected and made into honey. Honey experts will say this is the best kind because all the properties of that one flower whether medical or for taste concerns are gathered into a unique honey. This is when the best honey becomes valuable, like Buckwheat honey or Manuka honey that both provide relief for certain medical ailments.

Raw honey is often mono floral and is widely considered to provide greater health benefits than poly floral honey. Though it takes longer to make, it retains all the vitamins, enzymes and minerals from the flower.

Poly floral honey is a more commercial way of producing honey. A hive gathers its nectar from many different flowers and therefore loses the individual properties of each in their honey. This is the most common honey that can be bought today. It is quick to make and sell and dominates the honey market. But there are actually die hard honey fans that prefer poly floral honey, stating that the mono floral kind is often not as sweet or has a distinct flavour drawn from the parent flower.

Honey culture has existed for hundreds of years in rituals, in medicine and in the culinary arts. In some cultures eating honey from the comb ensured that your children would be born strong and without defect.

But which honey is the best? Every nation would say theirs is the best, the Germans would say a German honey, the Australians likewise, the Italians would claim to have the best honey bees, etc. In the end it boils down to personal taste and values.

If you are a health nut, you might prefer single flower honey; if you enjoy a certain brand at your local supermarket you'd mark that one as the best. The first piece of toast with honey you ever ate could take the prize. Perhaps you've been trying to perfect a recipe and honey made it work, or the rich colour appeals to you.

Whatever your reasons, we all have a favourite. For the curious among us here are some special varieties you can try to help you decide: Sourwood honey, lavender honey, sage honey, cactus honey, clover honey, basswood honey or orange blossom. Have fun with tasting these and finding the honey that's best for you!



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