

Crystallized Honey

Honey crystallization happens naturally and is a sign of its purity, not spoilage. In fact, the quick crystallization proves that your honey is high quality and hasn't been processed. This happens because the pollen hasn't been filtered out, and your honey hasn't been damaged by pasteurization. Crystallized honey is a sign that you're enjoying natural and 100 percent pure honey.

Honey taken from the hive is liquid, but over time, its chemical composition can alter its texture. It is supersaturated with sugars in relation to its water content, and as the sugars separate from the moisture, it begins to crystallize.

Honey is an environmentally responsive substance that is affected by everything both in and around it--from botanical sources to regional, seasonal, and storage conditions. It expresses the flavours and textures of its specific landscape: different places, climates, flowers, plants, and trees shape how honey looks, tastes, and feels. Crystallization is part of this complex expression.

Honey connoisseurs are aware of the value and rarity of regionally specific honeys: they take the time to seek them out in various stages of crystallization at local shops and farmers' markets. Just as the froth or "crema" on espresso was once viewed negatively but is now seen as a mark of quality, crystallization in honey should be viewed as a sign of authenticity.

Once crystallization begins, you can still enjoy the honey, as its flavour and nutritional value are the same. In fact, honey's evolving textures, from creamy to crunchy, can be adapted to new recipes and culinary uses. It can be scooped, dolloped, sliced, cut, or crumbled, making it a visually unique garnish or condiment. Serve it with cheese and fruit in chunks, or add a dollop of butter onto baked sweet potatoes or roast squash.

If you prefer liquid honey, it can be restored to its original liquid state with mild heat. The simplest method calls for warm water and a bowl. Simply add your jar of honey to the bowl, then fill the bowl with warm water from the tap until it reaches about half the height of the jar, let it sit, then carefully open the jar and stir the honey with a spoon until it reaches your desired consistency. This can take about 45 minutes.