



RAW HONEY

MIKE'S APIARIES

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The pure honey from southwest Michigan is a culmination of an incredible amount of work by honeybees. As the seasons unfold, the bees visit many flowers to collect nectar to make honey. These include dandelion, raspberry, blackberry, alfalfa, white & yellow clovers, vetches, basswood, milkweed, star thistle, goldenrod, and the asters. On average, they collectively fly 24,000 miles and visit three to nine million flowers to make one pound of honey.

What has changed dramatically in the last 100 years is how honey is marketed. In the past all honey was sold as a raw and unheated product, in a container or comb, to local and regional markets. Today, most of the honey sold in the marketplace is controlled by large packers who buy from beekeepers worldwide. Much of the honey sold in this area is from China, Argentina, and regions far removed from where the honey is produced. Commercially processed honeys are heated to a high temperature that kills the natural enzymes in honey. High heat also alters the flavor and fragrance of honey. The advantages of high heat processing are that it is cheaper and it destroys the enzymes that will cause the honey to crystallize. Longer shelf life is achieved at the sacrifice of destroying the natural health and quality of the product.

Raw honey is achieved by heating the honey to 100 degrees and pumping it through a strainer that lets the healthful minerals, vitamins, enzymes, amino acids, and pollen pass through, but keeps out the beeswax and impurities. This low heat does no harm to the honey because the bees themselves maintain the temperature in the hive at about 95 degrees. The raw honey is then packaged and sealed into various containers.

Honey never goes bad. If it turns cloudy or crystallizes, you can bring it back to its normal state by putting it in a hot water bath at 100-110 degrees (F) and let it return to its original clarity. How long you need to keep the honey in hot water will depend on the size of the container and to what degree the honey is crystallized.