

INTERNATIONAL FERMENTED BEVERAGES CUP

UNOFFICIAL APPENDIX GUIDE TO FUNCTIONAL AND NON-ALCOHOLIC CIDERS

Unofficial supplement to the BJCP 2025 Cider Style Guide



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Developed as a supplement to the BJCP 2025 Cider Style Guide

This appendix adopts and extends the BJCP methodology for non-alcoholic and functional ciders. Categories C1-C4 are governed by the official BJCP 2025 Guide. All other rights reserved.

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INTRODUCTION TO CATEGORY C5

RELATIONSHIP TO THE BJCP 2025 GUIDE

This Category C5 was developed to complement the official C1-C4 categories of the BJCP 2025 Cider Style Guide, providing an evaluation framework for emerging products that do not fit into traditional categories. Judges should familiarize themselves with the fundamental principles established in the BJCP 2025 Guide before evaluating Category C5 products, as this appendix assumes knowledge of the basic evaluation techniques and cider terminology established in that guide.

Non-Alcoholic and Functional Ciders

The Non-Alcoholic and Functional Ciders Category C5 developed by Patagonian Yeast represents a comprehensive effort to categorize and describe emerging styles of ciders that address modern trends toward conscious consumption, non-alcoholic options, and functional foods.

The objectives of this category are to better recognize and categorize non-alcoholic and low-alcohol products that maintain the authentic character of cider, address the growing demand for functional alternatives that offer additional health benefits, describe innovative products that combine cider-making tradition with modern functional ingredients, provide an evaluation framework for products ranging from completely non-alcoholic to low-alcohol, and to help competition organizers appropriately categorize this diverse range of products.

Styles and Subcategories

Category C5 uses a system of subcategories ranging from C5A to C5J, covering everything from traditional non-alcoholic ciders to innovative functional products. Each subcategory has distinctive characteristics, but all maintain the fundamental character of cider as a recognizable base.

Subcategories C5A-C5F focus on non-alcoholic or low-alcohol versions of traditional cider and perry styles. Subcategories C5G-C5J address functional products that incorporate ingredients for specific health and wellness benefits.

Use of Category C5

This category was designed primarily for cider competitions, but it also serves as a reference for innovative producers, distributors, and consumers interested in non-alcoholic alternatives and functional products. The individual descriptions are written to aid in structured evaluation during competitions.

Important: Category C5 is a guideline, not specifications. It is intended to describe the general characteristics of the most common examples and to aid in their evaluation; it is not intended to be strictly enforced specifications. These are suggestions, not strict limits.

Basic Categorization

The categorization of C5 styles is based on alcohol content (non-alcoholic vs. low alcohol), production method (dealcoholization, controlled fermentation, or addition of functional ingredients), and the presence of additional ingredients (fruits, spices, probiotics, vitamins, adaptogens, etc.).

Non-alcoholic ciders (0.0-0.5% ABV), low-alcohol ciders (0.5-3.0% ABV), and functional ciders (variable) represent the main divisions, each with specific subcategories based on added ingredients, production techniques, or intended functionality.

Common Attributes of All C5 Styles

It is assumed that the attributes described in this section should be present in every C5 style description, unless otherwise noted.

Unless explicitly stated, it is assumed that all C5 styles should maintain a recognizable cider character as a fundamental basis, be free of significant technical defects, show harmonious integration between the base cider and any added ingredients, and comply with applicable local regulations for non-alcoholic or functional products.

All C5 products should display an appropriate balance between acidity, tannins (if present), alcohol (in low-alcohol products), and residual sweetness according to their specific subcategory. Functional ingredients should not dominate the profile or create unpleasant medicinal or artificial flavors.

Subcategory Description Format

We use a standard format to describe C5 subcategories:

- **Overall Impression:** The essence of the subcategory and its distinctive characteristics
- **Aroma and Flavor:** The primary sensory characteristics that define the subcategory
- **Appearance:** Expected color, clarity, and carbonation
- **Mouthfeel:** Body, texture, and other tactile aspects
- **Ingredients:** Typical components and production methods
- **Comments:** Technical, cultural, or additional notes
- **Entry Instructions:** Specific requirements for competitions
- **Varieties:** Types of apple, pear, or other appropriate ingredients
- **Vital Statistics:** Permitted OG, FG, ABV, sweetness, and carbonation
- **Commercial Examples:** Selection of representative products

IMPORTANT REMINDER: THESE DESCRIPTIONS ARE GUIDELINES TO ASSIST IN EVALUATION AND CATEGORIZATION. VITAL STATISTICS RANGES AND SENSORY DESCRIPTIONS SHOULD BE INTERPRETED AS GENERAL GUIDELINES, NOT ABSOLUTE LIMITS. INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY WITHIN THE SPIRIT OF EACH SUBCATEGORY ARE WELCOME.

GENERAL ENTRY INSTRUCTIONS FOR CATEGORY C5

YOU MUST specify for all subcategories:

- Level of carbonation (Still, Pétillant, Sparkling)
- Level of sweetness (Dry, Semi-dry, Medium, Semi-sweet, Sweet)
- All functional ingredients used with concentrations where relevant
- All potential allergens present
- Apple varieties used and their proportions
- Base cider style (if applicable)
- Specific production process
- Source of functional ingredients (organic, natural vs. synthetic)

REGULATORY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Health claims must comply with local regulations
- Some ingredients may be restricted in certain jurisdictions
- Nutrition labeling may be required
- Alcohol limits may affect product classification

C5. NON-ALCOHOLIC AND FUNCTIONAL CIDERS

Non-Alcoholic and Functional Ciders represent a growing category that includes products with very low or no alcohol content, as well as ciders fortified with functional ingredients for specific health and wellness benefits. This category reflects modern trends toward conscious consumption, non-alcoholic options, and functional foods.

The development of this category responds to the growing demand for non-alcoholic alternatives that maintain the complexity and character of traditional fermented beverages, as well as products that offer additional health benefits beyond simple taste pleasure.

C5A. Non-Alcoholic Traditional Cider

Overall Impression: A refreshing cider that maintains the authentic character of apples and the complexity of a fermented beverage, but without significant alcohol content. It should offer the sensory experience of a traditional cider while remaining accessible to all consumers.

Aroma and Flavor: Noticeable and fresh apple character, which can range from fruity-floral to more complex and vinous. It should maintain the complexity derived from controlled fermentation without raw flavors of unfermented juice. Apple-derived esters may be present but should not be dominant. Acidity should be balanced, providing freshness without being piercing or harsh. It may show a slight yeast character that adds complexity. Tannins, if present, should be light and contribute to the structure without adding excessive bitterness. The finish should be clean and refreshing.

Appearance: Clear to bright, with no visible cloudiness. Color ranges from very pale straw to light gold. Red-fleshed apple varieties may produce a slight pink tint. Carbonation, if present, should form a light foam that dissipates quickly.

Mouthfeel: Light to medium-light body, similar to a young white wine. Carbonation can range from still to sparkling but should complement the overall profile. There should be no noticeable alcoholic warmth. Light tannins may provide a slight astringency that enhances the perception of dryness.

Ingredients: Table apples or specific cider varieties, depending on the desired profile. Dealcoholization techniques may include vacuum distillation, reverse osmosis, or early arrest of fermentation. Yeasts selected for specific flavor profiles. Malic acid may be adjusted for balance. Natural preservatives allowed for stability.

Comments: Production requires specialized techniques to maintain the character of cider while minimizing alcohol. Methods include controlled fermentation at low temperatures, use of specific yeasts with low alcohol production, or post-fermentation dealcoholization techniques. Microbiological stability is critical due to the absence of alcohol as a natural preservative. May require pasteurization or sterile filtration. Not to be confused with carbonated apple juice.

Entry Instructions: Participants MUST specify the method used to achieve low alcohol content. They MUST specify carbonation and sweetness levels. They MAY specify apple varieties used.

Varieties: Any variety suitable for cider, from dessert apples to heritage varieties.

Vital Statistics:

OG: 1.040 – 1.055

ABV: 0.0–0.5%

Carbonation: Any level permitted

FG: 1.000 – 1.020

Sweetness: Any level permitted

Commercial Examples: Schilling Non-Alcoholic Cider, Seedlip & Tonic variations, Premium non-alcoholic cider brands

C5B. Non-Alcoholic Fruit Cider

Overall Impression: A harmonious integration of the base apple character with additional declared fruits, maintaining a significant non-alcoholic profile. The added fruit should complement, not dominate, the fundamental character of the cider.

Aroma and Flavor: The apple character should remain recognizable and form the basis of the flavor profile. Added fruits may appear fresh, lightly cooked, or like light jam, but should always display a fermented character rather than raw juices. Fruit intensity may vary depending on the fruit used and the amount added. Stone fruits (peach, plum) tend to integrate smoothly; berries can be more pronounced; citrus fruits add bright acidity. The balance between the acidity of the apple and the added fruit should create a coherent profile. Any sweetness should balance the overall acidity without becoming cloying.

Appearance: Color appropriate for the added fruits, which can range from pale straw to deep shades of red, purple, or amber depending on the fruits used. It should be clear to bright with no cloudiness from unprocessed fruit. Red fruits should provide reddish to purple colors, not orange tones that suggest oxidation.

Mouthfeel: Light to medium body, influenced by both the base cider and the added fruits. Some fruits may contribute additional acidity (citrus, tart berries) or tannins (grapes, some stone fruits). The texture should be clean with no noticeable pulp residue.

Ingredients: Non-alcoholic base cider as in C5A, plus fruit added in the form of juice, purée, or whole fruit during fermentation. Fruit may be added at various stages of the process. Clarification techniques may be necessary to maintain the desired appearance. Preservatives may be necessary to prevent refermentation of fruit sugars.

Comments: Typically made from at least 75% apple juice, but this value does not need to be declared. The final product must retain a recognizable cider character. The description of the cider is critical information for judges. Stability may be more challenging than for ciders without fruit due to additional sugars and nutrients from the added fruit. Some common combinations include apple-pear, apple-berry, apple-stone fruit.

Entry Instructions: Participants MUST specify all added fruits. They MUST specify carbonation and sweetness levels. They MAY specify the dealcoholization method. They MAY specify base apple varieties. They MUST declare potential allergens.

Varieties: Any apple variety suitable for base cider, plus complementary fruits

Vital Statistics:

OG: 1.045 – 1.065

ABV: 0.0–0.5%

Carbonation: Any level permitted

FG: 1.000 – 1.025

Sweetness: Any level permitted

Commercial Examples: Non-alcoholic fruit cider blends, Premium dealcoholized fruit ciders

C5C. Non-Alcoholic Spiced Cider

Overall Impression: A pleasant integration of cider and added spices, herbs, or botanicals. The apple character should combine with the botanicals to give a balanced result without significant alcohol.

Aroma and Flavor: The apple character and added botanicals should be noticeable and complementary. It is a fault if the botanicals dominate or seem artificial. Raw or harsh spice flavors are undesirable. Hops, if used, should have a fresh, green character, not a grassy or vegetal quality. Some spices are stronger than others. Oxidation of the special ingredients or base cider is a fault. The overall profile should be harmonious and drinkable.

Appearance: Clear to bright, appropriate for the base style. Color appropriate for the added botanicals and base style. Clarity may be affected by herbal material, but excessive cloudiness should be avoided.

Mouthfeel: Reflects the base style. The cider may be tannic or astringent due to the effect of added botanicals but should not be bitter due to over-extraction. Some ingredients may contribute tannins, bitterness, acidity, or other effects.

Ingredients: Non-alcoholic base cider plus any combination of spices, herbs, or vegetables. Botanicals may be added as extracts, tinctures, teas, or raw material. Hops may be used for aromatic character. Extraction techniques may include cold infusion, maceration, or decoction.

Comments: The final product must maintain a recognizable cider character. Hopped ciders typically exhibit a fresh 'dry hop' character, not hop bitterness. The description of the cider is critical information for the judges. If special ingredients are declared, they must be noticeable. Stability may require special consideration with certain botanicals.

Entry Instructions: Entrants MUST specify all added spices. If hops are used, the entrant MUST specify the varieties. They MUST specify carbonation and sweetness levels. They MAY specify the dealcoholization method. They MUST declare potential allergens.

Varieties: Any appropriate variety, depending on the base cider

Vital Statistics:

OG: 1.045 – 1.070

ABV: 0.0–0.5%

Carbonation: Any level permitted

FG: 1.000 – 1.025

Sweetness: Any level permitted

Commercial examples: Non-alcoholic spiced ciders, Dealcoholized hopped ciders, Herbal ciders

C5D. Non-Alcoholic Perry

Overall Impression: A refreshing beverage made primarily from pears that retains the distinctive character of perry while lacking significant alcohol. It should offer the unique profile of fermented pears without the alcohol content.

Aroma and Flavor: Noticeable pear character that can be subtle to quite fruity. The pear character reflects flavors expected from fermented table pears, which may not taste strongly of fresh pears. Drier versions tend toward a profile similar to a young white wine. The acidity level should be mild to balanced, not piercing. Tannins may be soft to balanced, but should not add significant bitterness. Should not be sticky, viscous, or oily.

Appearance: Slightly cloudy to clear. Generally quite pale, straw to golden in color. May show slight effervescence if carbonated.

Mouthfeel: Relatively full-bodied. Low to moderate tannins apparent as astringency. Carbonation quiet to sparkling, although most are no more than moderate. Sorbitol from some pears may give an impression of sweetness even in dry perrys.

Ingredients: Table pears or pears specific to perry, depending on the desired profile. Dealcoholization techniques similar to non-alcoholic ciders. May require special clarification techniques due to the nature of pears. Preservatives may be necessary for stability.

Comments: Compared to traditional perry, this non-alcoholic version should retain the unique character of fermented pears. Some table pears contain significant amounts of sorbitol, which can give an impression of sweetness. Non-alcoholic production presents unique challenges due to the natural characteristics of pears. Perrys are notoriously difficult to clarify.

Entry Instructions: Entrants MUST specify the method used to achieve low alcohol content. They MUST specify carbonation and sweetness levels. They MAY specify pear varieties used.

Varieties: Table pears such as Bartlett, Anjou, Bosc, or heritage varieties for perry

Vital Statistics:

OG: 1.045 – 1.060

ABV: 0.0–0.5%

Carbonation: Any permitted level

FG: 1.000 – 1.020

Sweetness: Any level permitted

Commercial examples: Non-alcoholic perry varieties, Dealcoholized pear ciders

C5E. Non-Alcoholic Experimental Cider

Overall Impression: An open category for non-alcoholic ciders with ingredients or processes that do not fit into the above categories, maintaining the recognizable character of cider while exploring new non-alcoholic frontiers.

Aroma and Flavor: The cider character must always be present and must fit with the added ingredients or process effects. Overall balance and drinkability are the critical success factors for this style. The resulting cider should contain recognizable experimental components and be pleasant to drink. Harmonious integration is key.

Appearance: Clear to bright, appropriate for the base style. The color should be that of a standard cider unless other ingredients or processes contribute color. The presentation should remain attractive.

Mouthfeel: Reflects the base style, but may also display tannic, astringent, bitter, heavy-bodied, or other characteristics as determined by the declared ingredients or processes.

Ingredients: Non-alcoholic base cider plus any experimental ingredients or processes not covered in other subcategories. May include non-alcoholic concentration techniques, fermentation with unique cultures, addition of honey, other sweeteners, wood aging, or innovative production techniques.

Comments: Some examples that fit into this category include: non-alcoholic ciders with added honey, non-alcoholic ciders with significant wood character, non-alcoholic ciders that mimic ice cider or fire cider styles, non-alcoholic ciders with both spices and fruits, unique hybrids, or non-alcoholic ciders that otherwise meet existing definitions except that they are notably outside the listed style parameters. Regardless of the experimental nature, the resulting beverage must be recognizable as cider.

Entry Instructions: Entrants **MUST** specify the ingredients or processes that make the entry an experimental cider. They **MUST** specify carbonation and sweetness levels. They **MUST** specify the dealcoholization method. They **MAY** specify a base style or provide a more detailed description of the concept. They **MUST** declare potential allergens.

Varieties: Any appropriate variety, depending on the base cider

Vital Statistics:

OG: 1.040 – 1.080 (variable depending on ingredients) **FG:** 1.000 – 1.030 (variable depending on ingredients) **Sweetness:** Variable depending on concept

ABV: 0.0–0.5%

Carbonation: Any level permitted

Commercial examples: Innovative non-alcoholic ciders, experimental dealcoholized products

C5F. Low Alcohol Cider and Perry

Overall Impression: A cider or perry with minimal but perceptible alcoholic character that retains the traditional characteristics of the fermented beverage. Offers a more complete experience than completely non-alcoholic options while remaining in the low alcohol range.

Aroma and Flavor: In ciders: Well-developed apple character that may show the complexity of traditional fermentation. In perrys: Noticeable pear character that reflects the characteristics of fermented pears. Esters may be present and contribute to the fruity perception without being dominant. May show a slight yeast character that adds depth. The fermentation profile should be clean with no rustic notes or excessive MLF. Acidity should be balanced, providing structure without dominating. Tannins, if present, should be light to moderate and contribute to the dryness of the finish. Alcohol should be subtle, adding body and complexity without noticeable heat. In perrys, natural sorbitol may contribute an impression of sweetness even in dry versions.

Appearance: Clear to bright with the typical color of traditional cider or perry, ranging from straw to medium gold. Red-fleshed apple varieties may contribute pink tones in ciders. Perrys tend to be paler, generally straw to light gold. Carbonation may create a light, transient foam.

Mouthfeel: Light to medium body with a fuller feel than completely non-alcoholic versions. In perrys, the body may be relatively fuller due to natural sorbitol. Minimal or imperceptible alcoholic warmth. Carbonation can vary widely but should complement the overall profile. Light tannins may provide additional structure, typically being more pronounced in heritage perrys.

Ingredients: For ciders: Apple varieties suitable for traditional cider. For perrys: Table pears or pears specific to perry. Production techniques may include early interrupted fermentation, controlled post-fermentation dilution, or blending

of fermented beverages with fresh juice. Yeasts selected for specific flavor profiles and controlled attenuation. Acidity adjustments permitted. For perrys, special clarification techniques may be required.

Comments: This style fills the gap between completely non-alcoholic beverages and traditional full-strength ciders/perries. It is particularly popular in markets where "session strength" products are appreciated. Production requires careful fermentation control or precise dilution techniques. May appeal to consumers seeking the character of a fermented beverage with responsible alcohol consumption. Some countries have specific regulatory categories for low-alcohol beverages. Low-alcohol perrys present unique challenges due to the natural characteristics of pears and their difficulty to clarify.

Entry Instructions: Entrants MUST specify whether it is cider or perry. They MUST specify the method used to achieve low alcohol content. They MUST specify carbonation and sweetness levels. They MAY specify apple or pear varieties used.

Varieties: For ciders: Same as traditional Common Cider. For perrys: Table pears such as Bartlett, Anjou, Bosc, or heritage varieties for perry.

Vital Statistics:

OG: 1.040 – 1.060

ABV: 0.5–3.0%

Carbonation: Any level permitted

FG: 1.005 – 1.020

Sweetness: Any level permitted

Commercial examples: Session-strength ciders, low alcohol craft ciders, low alcohol perry varieties

C5G. Probiotic Enhanced Cider

Overall Impression: A base cider supplemented with live probiotic cultures that provide potential digestive health benefits while maintaining a pleasant and balanced flavor profile.

Aroma and Flavor: The base apple character should remain prominent and recognizable. Probiotic cultures may contribute light to moderate notes ranging from slightly tart to subtly funky, but should never be unpleasant or dominate the profile. It may exhibit more complex acidity due to organic acids produced by beneficial bacteria. The profile should be clean and refreshing, not overly acidic or strange. Some strains may contribute subtle notes similar to yogurt or kefir, but this should be well integrated.

Appearance: May be slightly cloudy due to live cultures in suspension, which is acceptable and expected. Typical cider color, potentially influenced by additional ingredients used to support probiotic cultures. Carbonation may be variable, including natural carbonation from probiotic activity.

Mouthfeel: Light to medium body. May have slight natural effervescence from ongoing culture activity. Texture may be slightly richer due to polysaccharides produced by some probiotic strains. Should not be viscous or ropy.

Ingredients: Base cider made from appropriate apples. Specific probiotic cultures such as Lactobacillus, Bifidobacterium, or other beneficial strains. May include prebiotics (fibers that feed probiotics) such as inulin, FOS, or natural fruit fibers. Residual or added sugars may be necessary to maintain the viability of the cultures. Controlled fermentation techniques to balance probiotic activity with the desired flavor profile.

Comments: Probiotics must be alive and viable at the time of consumption, which presents unique production and storage challenges. Refrigeration may be necessary to maintain the viability of cultures. CFU (colony-forming unit) count must be sufficient for potential health benefits. Interaction between cider yeasts and probiotic bacteria must be carefully managed. Some markets have specific regulations regarding health claims for probiotic products.

Entry Instructions: Participants MUST specify which probiotic cultures were used and the approximate CFU count. They MUST specify carbonation and sweetness levels. They MUST declare any added prebiotics. They MUST declare potential allergens.

Varieties: Any variety suitable for cider, often varieties with natural residual sugars

Vital Statistics:

OG: 1.045 – 1.065

ABV: 0.0–8.0%

Carbonation: Variable, often

FG: 1.005 – 1.025

Sweetness: Typically semi-sweet to sweet to support cultures naturally carbonated

Commercial Examples: Kombucha-cider hybrids, Probiotic enhanced craft ciders

C5H. Vitamin/Mineral Fortified Cider

Overall Impression: A nutritionally enriched cider that maintains the character and enjoyment of traditional cider while providing additional nutritional benefits through added vitamins, minerals, or antioxidants.

Aroma and Flavor: Apple character should remain dominant and appealing. Added vitamins and minerals should ideally not be noticeable in the flavor, or if they are, they should be well integrated without creating medicinal, metallic, or unpleasant notes. Some vitamins may contribute slight flavors (such as vitamin C adding acidity), but this should complement the overall profile. Antioxidants such as superfruit extracts may add additional fruit complexity that should be harmonious.

Appearance: Color may vary depending on the ingredients added. Vitamins such as beta-carotene may add golden tones, while berry antioxidants may contribute reddish hues. It should remain clear to bright unless turbidity is inherent in the added functional ingredients.

Mouthfeel: Typical body of the base cider. Minerals should not create unpleasant metallic or harsh sensations. Some supplements may slightly affect texture, but this should be kept to a minimum.

Ingredients: Base cider made from appropriate apple varieties. Added vitamins may include C, B vitamins, D, E, or multivitamin blends. Minerals may include calcium, magnesium, zinc, iron, or electrolyte blends. Antioxidants may be derived from superfruit extracts, green tea, or purified compounds. The form of supplements (natural vs. synthetic) may affect flavor and stability.

Comments: Fortification should be functional and provide meaningful levels of nutrients, not merely symbolic. The stability of vitamins can be challenging in a fermented cider environment, particularly with exposure to light and pH variations. Some vitamins may interact with other components of cider, affecting flavor or appearance over time. Regulations vary by country regarding nutritional claims and permitted fortification levels.

Entry Instructions: Participants **MUST** specify which vitamins/minerals were added and in what amounts. They **MUST** specify carbonation and sweetness levels. They **MAY** specify the source of the nutrients (natural vs. synthetic). They **MUST** declare potential allergens.

Varieties: Any variety suitable for cider, often selected to complement the added nutrients

Vital Statistics:

OG: 1.045 – 1.070

Sweetness: Any level, often adjusted to mask flavors from supplements

FG: 1.000 – 1.020

ABV: 0.0–8.0%

Carbonation: Any level permitted

Commercial examples: Vitamin-enhanced ciders, Electrolyte ciders, Antioxidant-rich ciders

C5I. Adaptogen Infused Cider

Overall Impression: An innovative cider infused with traditional adaptogenic herbs believed to help the body manage stress and promote overall wellness, while maintaining a pleasant and balanced flavor profile.

Aroma and Flavor: Careful balance between the fundamental apple character and the added adaptogens. Adaptogens should be noticeable but complementary, contributing complexity without becoming medicinal or overpowering. Ashwagandha may add subtle earthy notes; ginseng may contribute a slight herbal bitterness; turmeric () may add warm, spicy notes. The integration should be harmonious, creating a unique but drinkable profile. Any herbal bitterness should be balanced with appropriate sweetness or acidity.

Appearance: Color can vary significantly depending on the adaptogens used. Turmeric can create deep golden tones; green herbs can add greenish hues; roots can contribute darker tones. Clarity can be affected by herbal material, but excessive cloudiness should be avoided.

Mouthfeel: Adaptogens may contribute light tannins, astringency, or textural complexity. Some herbs may create a warming or cooling sensation. Overall texture should remain pleasant and not harsh or medicinal.

Ingredients: Cider base with appropriate apple varieties. Adaptogens may include ashwagandha, ginseng (American, Asian, Siberian), rhodiola, schisandra, turmeric, holy basil, reishi, cordyceps, or other recognized herbs. Adaptogens may be added as extracts, tinctures, concentrated teas, or raw herbal material. Extraction techniques may include cold infusion, alcohol extraction, or decoction.

Comments: Adaptogens are a category of herbs with a long history in traditional medicine, particularly in Ayurvedic and Traditional Chinese Medicine systems. Dosage should be appropriate for consumption as a beverage, not as a concentrated supplement. Flavor extraction may require specialized techniques to minimize bitterness while maximizing perceived functionality. Regulations on health claims vary widely and should be considered.

Entry Instructions: Participants MUST specify which adaptogens were used and the method of incorporation. They MUST specify carbonation and sweetness levels. They MUST declare potential allergens and known drug interactions. They MAY specify concentrations or extraction methods.

Varieties: Any appropriate variety, often selected to complement the herbal profile

Vital Statistics:

OG: 1.045 – 1.070

Sweetness: Variable, often semi-sweet to balance herbs

FG: 1.000 – 1.025

ABV: 0.0–8.0%

Carbonation: Any level permitted

Commercial Examples: Adaptogenic beverages, Wellness ciders, Herbal-infused craft ciders

C5J. Other Functional Cider

Overall Impression: An open category for ciders with innovative functional ingredients not covered in other subcategories, maintaining the recognizable character of cider while exploring new frontiers in functional beverages.

Aroma and Flavor: The cider character should remain the recognizable foundation, with functional ingredients integrated in a way that complements rather than competes with the apple profile. Ingredients should add interesting complexity without creating unpleasant, medicinal, or artificial flavors. The overall balance should result in an enjoyable beverage that appeals to both cider enthusiasts and wellness-minded consumers.

Appearance: Appropriate for the declared ingredients. May vary widely in color and clarity depending on functional additives. Presentation should remain attractive and professional.

Mouthfeel: Reflects the base cider modified by the effects of the functional ingredients. The texture should remain pleasant without being viscous, gritty, or strange unless inherent and acceptable for the specific ingredients used.

Ingredients: Base cider with appropriate apple varieties plus functional ingredients such as collagen (for joint/skin health), prebiotic fiber (for digestive health), electrolytes (for hydration), CBD (where legal, for relaxation), MCT oil (for energy), plant protein, superfood powders, or functional mushroom extracts. Formulation should consider stability, solubility, and palatability.

Comments: This subcategory captures the evolving nature of the functional beverage market. Examples may include ciders with collagen for beauty/aging, ciders with fiber for digestive health, ciders with electrolytes for post-exercise recovery, or ciders with CBD for relaxation (where legal). Functional ingredients must be safe for consumption and appropriate for the target population. Regulatory and health claims must comply with local laws. Innovation is encouraged, but functionality must be meaningful, not merely marketing.

Entry Instructions: Participants MUST specify all functional ingredients used and their intended purpose. They MUST specify carbonation and sweetness levels. They MUST declare all potential allergens and known interactions. They MAY provide information on concentrations and methods of incorporation.

Varieties: Any variety suitable for cider, selected to complement the functional ingredients

Vital Statistics:

OG: 1.040 – 1.080 (variable depending on ingredients)

ABV: 0.0–8.0%

Carbonation: Any level permitted

FG: 1.000 – 1.030 (variable depending on ingredients)

Sweetness: Variable, often adjusted to mask or complement functional ingredients

Commercial examples: Collagen ciders, CBD ciders (where legal), Electrolyte recovery ciders, Superfood ciders