

Honey Wine in Ethiopian Languages

Here is a list of Ethiopian languages and their words for "honey wine" and "honey." Note frequent similarities: Some are cognates, or words that evolved from a common ancestor, and some represent borrowing. More than one word may appear for a language because of the difficulty of transliterating the words into English, or because different linguists have recorded different words. Where linguists have identified a dialect with a different word, I have created a line for that data. I began this project around 2008 and finally completed it in 2021, when a linguist provided me with the Nayi word for honey wine.

The presence of a word in a language doesn't necessarily mean the culture drinks honey wine. Some cultures make honey beer or other fermented drinks, and Moslem cultures tend not to drink it. I have noted those instances. The languages come from Ethnologue and the words from linguists.

To learn more about *t'ej*, visit my website: T'ej: The Ethiopian Honey Wine.

Ethiopian Language	Honey Wine	Honey	Language Family	Language Exonyms & Endonyms (Alternative Names)	Honey Wine Name Source
Aari	<i>s'ajji</i>	<i>ant'si</i>	Omotic	Ara, Aro, Shankilla [Dialects: Gozza, Bako, Biyo, Galila, Laydo, Seyki, Shangama, Sido, Wubahamer (Ubamer), Zeddo]	Richard Hayward
Afar	<i>malb</i> <i>gohoyu</i> (honey beer)	<i>malb</i>	Cushitic	Afaraf, Danakil, Denkel, `Afar Af, Adal [Dialects: Northern Afar, Central Afar, Aussa, Baadu (Ba`adu)]	Various linguists
Alaaba	<i>daat'a</i> (Moslem culture, alcohol forbidden)	<i>malabu</i>	Cushitic	Alaaba, Halaba	Yvonne Treis
Amharic	<i>t'ej</i> ጠጅ	<i>mar</i> ማር	Semitic	None	Amharic dictionaries
Anfillo	<i>bita</i>	<i>jeyshey</i>	Omotic	Southern Mao	Wolf Leslau
Anuak	<i>ogool</i> , <i>ocatha</i> (honey beer)	<i>maar kic</i>	Nilotic (Nilo-Saharan)	Anywak, Anyuak, Anywa, Yambo, Jambo, Yembo, Bar, Burjin, Miroy, Moojanga, Nuro [Dialects: Adoyo, Coro, Lul, Openo]	Mechthild Reh

Arbore	<i>d'aadi</i>	<i>ked'ette</i>	Cushitic	Arbora, Erbore, Irbore	Echi Gabbert
Argobba	<i>t'ej</i> (Moslem culture, rarely consumed)	<i>dus</i>	Semitic	None [Dialects: Ankober, Shonke]	Abbebe Kifleyesus
Awngi	<i>mishi</i>	<i>nyargi,</i> <i>tseyari</i>	Cushitic	Awiya, Awi, Agaw, Agau, Agew, Agow, Awawar, Damot, Kwollanyoch	Robert Hetzron
Baiso	<i>t'ejji</i>	<i>malab,</i> <i>malabeel</i>	Cushitic	Bayso, Alkali	Richard Hayward
Bambassi	<i>bit'</i>	<i>jeyshey</i>	Omotic	Bambeshi, Siggoyo, Amam, Fadiro, Northern Mao, Didessa [Dialects: Kere, Bambassi]	Lionel Bender
Basketo	<i>t'ej</i>	<i>ees</i>	Omotic	Basketto, Baskatta, Mesketo	Dirk Bustorf
Bench	<i>es</i>	<i>es</i>	Omotic	Gimira, Ghimarra, Gimarra, Dizu [Dialects: Bench (Bencho, Benesho), Mer (Mieru), She (Sce, Kaba)]	Christian Rapold
Berta	<i>baas'a</i>	<i>gongso,</i> <i>wonshoo</i> (Fadashi), <i>mosho</i> (Gobato)	Nilo- Saharan	Beni Shangul, Bertha, Barta, Burta, Wetawit, Jebelawi [Dialects: Shuru, Bake, Undu, Mayu, Wadashi, Fadashi, Dabuso, Gobato]	Ralph Siebert, Berta dictionary of the Benishangul-Gumuz Language Development Project
Bilin [in Eritrea]	<i>mes/miys, mid</i> ሜስ	<i>saxara</i>	Cushitic	Bogo, Bogos, Bilayn, Balen, Beleni, Belen, Bilein, Bileno, North Agaw	David Appleyard
Birale (nearly extinct)	<i>koronko</i>	<i>sho'kaya</i>	Unclassified Afro- Asiatic	Ongota, Birelle, Ifa'ongota, Shanqilla	Harold Fleming
Bodi	<i>gema,</i> <i>gemade boorini</i>	<i>boor</i>	Surmic (Nilo-	Dialect of Me'en	Mulugeta Seyoum

			Saharan)		
Boro	<i>bito</i>	<i>masa</i>	Omoti	Bworo, Shinasha, Scinacia [Dialects: Amuru, Wembera, Gamila, Guba]	David Turton
Burji	<i>boka/booka</i>	<i>diida</i>	Cushitic	Bambala, Bembala, Daashi	Grover Hudson
Bussa	<i>t'ayye</i>	<i>tanka</i>	Cushitic	Dobase, D'oopace, D'opaasunte, Lohu, Mashile, Mashelle, Masholle, Mosiye, Musiye, Gobeze, Gowase, Goraze, Orase	87% lexical similarity w/ Gawwada (seeking confirmation)
Chaha	<i>dagye, dege</i>	<i>weya</i>	Semitic	Sebat Bet Gurage dialect	Wolf Leslau
Chai	<i>gimay; t'acc</i>	<i>ret'e</i>	Surmic (Nilo-Saharan)	Cai, Caci	Jon Abbink; Gerrit Dimmendaal
Chara	<i>eesa</i>	<i>eesa</i>	Omoti	Ciara	Lionel Bender
Daasanach	<i>thaaniti, t'ej</i> (Made by nearby Kara people)	<i>thaaniti</i>	Cushitic	Dathanaik, Dathanaic, Dathanik, Gheleba, Geleba, Geleb, Gallab, Galuba, Dama, Marille, Merile, Morille, Reshiat, Russia, Shangilla	Toru Sagawa
Dime	<i>tajj; gabzi</i> (local beer)	<i>khuru</i>	Omoti	Dima	Mulugeta Seyoum
Dirasha	<i>t'ajjet tanket</i>	<i>tanket, tanga</i>	Cushitic	Dhirasha, Diraasha, Dirayta, Gardulla, Ghidole, Gidole	Wondwosen Tesfaye
Dizi	<i>xezhi</i>	<i>iinsn</i>	Omoti	Maji, Dizi-Maji, Sizi, Twoyu	Marvin Dean Beachy
Dorze	<i>t'ej</i>	<i>'ees</i>	Omoti	None	Rhoda Halperin

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Falashan	<i>miz</i>	<i>saea</i>	Cushitic	Dialect of Qimant	David Appleyard
Gafat (extinct)	<i>s'aj</i>	<i>debs, debsa, mar</i>	Semitic	None	Wolf Leslau
Galila	<i>s'ajji</i>	<i>kuri</i>	Omotic	Dialect of Aari	Richard Hayward
Gamo-Gofa-Dawro	<i>t'ej</i> <i>'ees (Gamo)</i>	<i>'ees, 'eesa</i>	Omotic	None [Dialects: Gamo (Gemu), Gofa (Goffa), Dawro (Dauro, Kullo, Cullo, Ometay). Subdialects of Dawro are Konta (Conta) and Kucha (Kusha, Koysa)]	Malcolm Fosberg, Wolde Gossa Tadesse
Ganza	<i>seleya</i>	<i>esh, p'uk'i</i> (red honey)	Omotic	Ganzo, Koma	Joshua Smolders
Gawwada	<i>t'ayye</i>	<i>sakmo</i>	Cushitic	Gauwada, Gawata, Kawwad'a, Kawwada. [Dialects: Dihina (Tihina, Tihinte), Gergere (K'ark'arte), Gobeze, Gollango (Kollanko), Gorose (Gorrose, Korrose), Harso (Worase)]	Mauro Tosco
Gedeo	<i>boka/booka, t'ajje</i>	<i>malebo</i>	Cushitic	Geddeo, Deresa, Derasa, Darasa, Derasanya, Darassa	Abebayehu Mesele, Klaus Wedekind
Ge'ez	<i>s'ajj, mes/miys</i> ጫሳ	<i>ma'ar</i> ጫሳ	Semitic	None	<i>Ser'ata Gebr</i> , Wolf Leslau
Gogot/Dobi	<i>dag'a, t'ej</i>	<i>weya</i>	Semitic	Dialect of Kistane	Wolf Leslau
Gumuz	<i>ke'e'-ka'tsha</i>	<i>ka'tsha</i>	Nilo-Saharan	Bega-Tse, Sigumza, Gumuzinya, Gumis, Gombo, Mendeya, Shankillinya, Shankilligna, Shanqilla, Debatsa, Debuga, Dehenda, Bega. [Dialects: Guba,	Colleen Ahland

				Wenbera, Sirba, Agalo, Yaso, Mandura, Dibate, Metemma]	
Gwama	<i>sun dham</i>	<i>tam</i>	Nilo-Saharan	Takwama, Kwama, Goma, Gogwama, Koma of Asosa, North Koma, Nokanoka, Afan Mao, Amam, T'wa Kwama	Donald Killian
Hadiyya	<i>dik'aasa</i>	<i>marabo</i>	Cushitic	Adiya, Adiye, Hadya, Adea, Hadia. [Dialects: Leemo, Soro]	Grover Hudson
Hamer-Banna	<i>zia</i> (Hamer) <i>ant'si</i> (Banna) <i>alla</i> (honey beer)	<i>kurri</i>	Omotic	Hamar-Koke, Hammercoche, Amarcocche, Cocche, Beshada, Amer, Amar, Ammar, Kara, Kerre	Susanne Epple, Jean Lydall
Harari	<i>t'ajji gohoy</i> (honey beer)	<i>mar</i>	Semitic	Hararri, Adare, Adere, Aderinya, Adarinnya, Gey Sinan	Wolf Leslau
Hozo	<i>bit'</i>	<i>tam</i>	Omotic	Begi-Mao	Daniel Aberra
Inor	<i>dag'a, t'ej</i>	<i>weya</i>	Semitic	Ennemor [Dialects: Enegegnny (Enner)]	Wolf Leslau
Kachama-Ganjule	'eesa (Kachama), shida (Ganjule)	'shida (Kachama) 'shir (Ganjule)	Omotic	Gats'ame, Get'eme, Gatame [Dialects: Ganjule (Ganjawle), Ganta, Kachama]	Fitsum Abate
Kacipo-Balesi (Baale)	<i>gimay</i>	<i>rete</i>	Surmic (Nilo-Saharan)	Baale [Dialects: Balesi, Zilmamu (Silmamo, Zelmamu, Zulmamu, Tsilmano), Kacipo (Kachepo, Suri, Western Suri)]	Michael Bryant
Kafa	<i>bito</i>	<i>eeyo</i>	Omotic	Kaficho, Kefa, Keffa, Caffino, Manjo [Dialects: Kafa, Bosha (Garó)] Related to Shekkacho	David Appleyard
Kambaata	<i>daat'a</i>	<i>malabu</i>	Cushitic	Kembata, Kemata, Kambara, Donga. [Dialects: Tambaro, Timbaro, Qabena]	Grover Hudson
Karo	<i>ala, sia</i>	<i>kurro</i>	Omotic	Kerre, Cherre	Felix Girke

Kistane/Soddo	<i>t'ej</i>	<i>ginz</i>	Semitic	Soddo, Soddo Gurage, North Gurage [Dialects: Soddo (Aymallal, Aymellel, Kestane, Kistane), Dobi (Dobbi, Gogot)]	Wolf Leslau
Komo	<i>shwii dam</i>	<i>daam</i>	Nilo-Saharan	Madiin, Koma	Manuel Otero
Komso	<i>taadita, tajjeeta</i>	<i>takma</i>	Cushitic	Afaa Xonso, Konso, Conso, Gato, Af-Kareti, Karate, Kareti	Ongaye Oda
Koorete	<i>t'eje, shida dana; sh'adzhe; caje</i>	<i>shida</i>	Omotic	Amarro, Badittu, Nuna, Koyra, Koore, Kwera	Binyam Sisay; Rolf Theil; R. Hayward
Kunfal	<i>mishi</i>	<i>nargi</i>	Cushitic	Kunfel, Kumfel	Teqebba Birru
Kwegu	<i>itire</i>	<i>jia</i>	Surmic (Nilo-Saharan)	Koegu, Kwegi, Bacha, Menja, Nidi. [Dialects: Yidinich (Yidinit, Yidi), Muguji]	Osamu Hieda
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Libido	<i>dik'aasa</i> (non-alcoholic, Moslem culture)	<i>marabo</i>	Cushitic	Maraqo, Marako	Joachim Crass
Majang	<i>ogool</i>	<i>eted'</i>	Surmic (Nilo-Saharan)	Mesengo, Masongo, Masango, Majanjiro, Tama, Ojanjur, Ajo, Ato Majang, Ato Majanger-Onk	Peter Unseth
Maale	<i>dago</i>	<i>'essi</i>	Omotic	Male	Azeb Amha
Me'en	<i>gima, boke</i>	<i>bor</i>	Surmic (Nilo-Saharan)	Mekan, Mie'en, Mieken, Meqan, Men. [Dialects: Bodi (Podi), Tishena (Teshina, Teshenna)]	Jon Abbink
Melo	<i>'ess, 'eesa</i>	<i>'eess</i>	Omotic	Malo	Takeshi Fujimoto
Mesqan	<i>dag'a, t'ej</i>	<i>weya</i>	Semitic	Masqan, Meskan	Wolf Leslau

Muher	<i>dagye, dege</i>	<i>weya</i>	Semitic	Sebat Bet Gurage dialect	Wolf Leslau
Murle	<i>gimoč</i>	<i>letec, retshe</i>	Surmic (Nilo-Saharan)	Murele, Merule, Mourle, Murule, Beir, Ajibba [Dialects: Olam (Ngalam, Bangalam)]	Edmond Mok
Mursi	<i>gimma</i>	<i>rete, retshe</i>	Surmic (Nilo-Saharan)	Murzi, Murzu, Merdu, Meritu, Dama	David Turton
Nayi	<i>'ees</i>	<i>'ees</i>	Omotic	Na'o, Nao	Andualem Adal
Nuer	<i>koang twaar</i> ("honey wine")	<i>twaar</i>	Nilotic (Nilo-Saharan)	Naath [Dialects: Eastern Nuer (Ji, Kany, Jikany, Door, Abigar)]	John Luk Jok
Nyangatom	<i>a-tede</i>	<i>akimyet a awo</i>	Nilotic (Nilo-Saharan)	Inyangatom, Donyiro, Dongiro, Idongiro	Serge Torney
Opuuo (T'apo)	<i>sitam</i>	<i>tam</i>	Nilo-Saharan	Opo-Shita, Opo, Opuo, Cita, Ciita, Shita, Shiita, Ansita, Kina, Kwina, Langa	Joshua Smolders
Oromo [West Central; Eastern (Hararghe region); and Borana-Arsi-Guji (southern region)]	<i>daad'ii</i> ዳዲ	<i>damma</i> ደማ	Cushitic	Afan Oromo, Oromiffa, Oromoo, Galla. [Dialects: Mecha (Maccha, Wellaga, Wallaga, Wollega), Raya, Wello (Wollo), Tulema (Tulama, Shoa, Shewa)]	Oromo dictionary
Oyda	<i>t'ej, dana</i> (local beer)	<i>shid'a</i>	Omotic	None	Bernhard Kohler
Qabena	<i>tajjita</i>	<i>malabu</i>	Cushitic	Kabenna, K'abeena, Wombisanta, Wanbasana [Dialect of Kambaata]	Wolf Leslau
Qimant	<i>miz</i>	<i>sayeya</i>	Cushitic	Kimanteney, Western Agaw. [Dialects: Dembiya, Hwarasa (Qwara, Qwarina, Kara), Kayla, Semyen, Achpar, Kwolasa (Kwolacha), Falashan, Kailina]	Hans-Jurgen Sasse

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Saho	<i>mees, bathce malab</i> (honey beer)	<i>baska</i>	Cushitic	Sao, Shaho, Shoho, Shiho [Dialects: Irob]	Moreno Vergari
Sebat Bet Gurage ("Seven Houses of Gurage")	<i>t'ej</i>	<i>weya</i>	Semitic	Gurage, Guraginya [Six dialects: Chaha (Cheha), Ezha (Eza, Izha), Gumer (Gwemarra), Gura, Gyeto, Muher]	Sharon Rose
Seze	<i>bit'</i>	<i>'ishi</i>	Omotic	Sezo	Lionel Bender
Shabo	<i>'oo, [tajan</i> (beer)]	<i>soi</i>	Nilo-Saharan	Shako, Mekeyer, Mikeyir, Mikair	Daniel Aberra
Shekkacho	<i>bito</i>	<i>eeyo</i>	Omotic	Moca, Mocha, Shakacho, Shekka	Wolf Leslau
Sheko	<i>taka</i>	<i>'eesa</i>	Omotic	Shekka, Tschako, Shako, Shak [Dialects: Dorsha, Bulla (Daan, Dan, Daanyir)]	Elisabeth Anne Hildebrand
Sidama	<i>malawo/malabo, t'ajje</i>	<i>malawo, malabo</i>	Cushitic	Sidamo 'Afo, Sidamina	Grover Hudson
Silt'e	<i>tajji</i>	<i>tegay</i>	Semitic	East Gurage, Selti, Silti [Dialects: Enneqor (Inneqor), Ulbarag (Urbareg), Wolane (Walane)]	Sharon Rose
Somali	<i>khamri malabeed</i> ("honey wine") [Moslem culture, not consumed]	<i>malab</i>	Cushitic	None	Mauro Tosco
Tigre	<i>mes/miys</i> ሜስ	<i>ma'ar</i> መዓር	Semitic	None	Wolf Leslau
Tigrinya	<i>mes/miys</i> ሜስ	<i>ma'ar</i> መዓር	Semitic	None	Tigrinya dictionary
Tirma	<i>gimay;</i>	<i>ret'e</i>	Surmic	Tirima, Terema, Terna, Dirma, Cirma, Tirmaga,	Jon Abbink;

	<i>t'acc</i>		(Nilo-Saharan)	Tirmagi	Gerrit Dimmendaal
Tsamai	<i>xoronko</i>	<i>zamu</i>	Cushitic	Ts'amay, S'amai, Tamaha, Tsamako, Tsamakko, Bago S'aamakk-Ulo, Kuile, Kule, Cule	Graziano Sava
Turkana	<i>epurot a aowu/aoo</i>	<i>aowu/aoo</i>	Nilotic (Nilo-Saharan)	None	Anthony Barrett
Uduk	<i>su dham</i>	<i>ayin</i>	Nilo-Saharan	Twampa, Kwanim Pa, Burun, Kebeirka, Othan, Korara, Kumus	Donald Killian
Wolane	<i>t'ajay</i>	<i>tegay</i>	Semitic	Dialect of Silt'e	Wolf Leslau
Wolayta	<i>'essa</i>	<i>'essa</i>	Omotic	Wellamo, Welamo, Wollamo, Wallamo, Walamo, Ualamo, Uollamo, Wolataita, Borodda, Uba, Ometo [Dialects: Zala, Dorze, Melo]	Azeb Amha
Xamtanga	<i>miz</i>	<i>sara</i>	Cushitic	Khamtanga, Simt'anga, Agawinya, Xamta, Xamir, Khamir	David Appleyard
Yemsa	<i>eesa</i>	<i>eesa, deema</i>	Omotic	Yem, Yemma, Janjero, Janjerinya, Janjor, Yangaro, Zinjero [Dialects: Fuga, Toba]	Hans and Gabi Schaumberger
Zergulla	<i>c'ajj</i>	<i>'shida</i>	Omotic	Zaysse	Azeb Amha
Zway	<i>sexar, t'eje</i>	<i>tage</i>	Semitic	Zay, Lak'i, Laqi, Gelilla	Wolf Leslau
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