

“Bottoms Up!”

Recipes for Herbal Drinkables, adapted from various sources

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Orange-Rosemary Liqueur

3 oranges
1 cup sugar
2 cups water
3/4 cup coarsely chopped rosemary leaves
1 cup vodka or Everclear
1/2 cup brandy or rum

Wash the oranges thoroughly, let them dry, and zest them. Combine the water and sugar in a medium saucepan and bring to a boil, stirring to dissolve sugar. Add the rosemary and simmer for 5-6 minutes, stirring occasionally. Strain through a fine sieve; discard the rosemary. Pour into a clean quart jar. Add orange zest and cool. Add vodka and brandy or rum. Cover tightly and store in a dark, cool place for 1 month. Strain, discard the zest, and rebottle. Cover tightly and age for another month. Makes about 3 cups.

Blood Orange Liqueur

4 blood oranges
1 lemon
Fresh ginger, about 2” long, peeled and sliced
2 cups vodka

1 cup water
1 cup sugar

Wash and dry the oranges and lemon. Peel the skin from the oranges and lemon (but leave the pith on the fruit). Put peels in a quart jar. Remove the pith from two of the oranges, reserving two others for another use. Cut the cleaned oranges into pieces and place in quart jar, smashing with the back of a spoon. Add ginger and stir. Pour the vodka into the jar.

To make simple syrup, combine water and sugar in a saucepan over medium-high heat. Bring to a boil and stir until the sugar has dissolved. Cool.

Pour the syrup into the fruit-alcohol mixture and cover tightly. Store in cool, dark place for at least a month, shaking occasionally.

Strain the liqueur through a double layer of cheesecloth into a pitcher. Strain a second time through a new double-layer of cheesecloth into bottles. Cap and store or use immediately. Makes about 3 cups.

Coffee Pecan Liqueur

1 cup vodka
1 cup brandy

1 1/2 teaspoons pecan extract
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 teaspoon orange zest

1 cup strong coffee
1/3 cup white sugar
2/3 cup light brown sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt

In a quart jar, combine vodka, brandy, extracts, and orange zest and set aside.

To make syrup: In a saucepan, over medium heat, bring coffee, sugars, and salt to a boil, stirring constantly. Reduce the heat and boil gently, stirring until the sugars have dissolved (3-5 minutes). Remove from heat and cool for 15 minutes or so.

Pour syrup into jar of alcohol mixture and cover tightly. Store in a cool, dark place for at least one month. Makes about 3 cups.

Johnny Appleseed's Liqueur

1/2 gallon apple juice
1/2 gallon apple cider
4 cinnamon sticks
1 whole clove

1 cup white sugar
1 cup brown sugar
3 cups 190 proof grain alcohol (such as Everclear)
2 cups vanilla vodka

Bring the apple cider, apple juice, cinnamon stick, whole clove, white sugar, and brown sugar together in a large pot; reduce heat to medium low and simmer for 20 minutes. Remove from heat and cool completely.

Stir the grain alcohol and vanilla vodka into the cooled mixture. Pour into bottles and refrigerate. Does not require aging. Makes about 5 quarts

Peach Liqueur Recipe

4 cups sugar
4 cup water
4 teaspoons lemon zest
4 teaspoons orange zest

8 pounds fresh peaches, stemmed and washed

6 cups 100-proof vodka

4 cups brandy

To make the syrup, bring the sugar, water, and fruit zests to a boil over a medium-high heat. Stir constantly to prevent scorching. Cool to lukewarm.

Cut the peaches in half. Remove and reserve the pits. Slice the peaches. Put peaches, pits into a 2-gallon container with a tight-fitting lid. Add syrup, vodka, and brandy. Stir and cover. Put it in a cool dark place for two weeks. At least once during the period, shake or stir.

After two weeks, strain out the solids and discard. Transfer the liqueur into a clean container. Cover and let stand for another 2 or 3 weeks. Filter the liqueur into its final container. Makes about 1 gallon.

Galliano

8 whole cloves
1 teaspoon chopped crystallized ginger
4 cups white sugar
12 drops peppermint extract

2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1 teaspoon anise extract*
15 drops yellow food coloring
2 (750 milliliter) bottles vodka

Place the cloves and ginger in a small jar and add enough vodka to cover. Seal and soak for 3 days. NO MORE! Strain the liquid, discarding the solids.

Measure the sugar into a gallon container. Add the peppermint, vanilla and anise extracts as well as the food coloring. Pour in the vodka, the strained vodka and yellow food coloring. Cover tightly and shake until the sugar dissolves. Age for one week MINIMUM.

*Adams and McCormick offer this product. Or you can make it yourself (with plenty of lead time)

1 teaspoon anise seeds
4 ounces vodka

Anise seeds (not to be confused with star anise) are available in grocery stores and from specialty spice shops. Purchase seeds with a best-by date that is two to three years in the future. They should have a strong licorice fragrance.

Clean and sterilize a 4-ounce jar and lid. Add the anise seeds and fill it with the vodka. Seal the jar and store it in a cool dark place. Shake the jar daily for the first week to encourage extraction. The extract will be ready to use in two to three months. The flavor will continue to intensify for as long as six months. When the extract reaches the intensity you want, filter through cheesecloth into a clean bottle and label.

Rosemary and Lemon Liqueur

Grated zest and juice of 5 large lemons
1 liter vodka
4 sprigs fresh rosemary (about 4 or 5 inches long)

2 cups sugar
1 cup water

Place lemon zest, juice, vodka and rosemary in a clean glass jar or bottle. Cover and let macerate in a cool, dark place for 1 month or more, giving the mixture a shake every few days.

Combine sugar and water in a small saucepan. Boil until sugar has completely dissolved. Let cool. Strain vodka mixture through a coffee filter into a clean jar or bottle with an airtight lid. Sweeten to taste with the sugar syrup. Cover and age at least 2 weeks. Store in the refrigerator or freezer for up to 1 year. Serve ice cold in small glasses.

Basil Liqueur

30 leaves fresh basil
1½ cups vodka
1½ cups sugar
¾ cup water

Combine basil and vodka in a clean glass jar. Cover and let stand in a cool, dark place for 6 weeks, giving the mixture a shake every few days.

Combine sugar and water in a small saucepan. Boil until sugar has completely dissolved. Let cool.

Strain the vodka mixture through a coffee filter into a clean jar or bottle with an airtight lid. Sweeten to taste with the sugar syrup. Store in a cool, dark place up to 1 year. Makes 1 pint

Ginger Ale

1 1/2 cups chopped peeled ginger (about 8 oz fresh ginger)
2 cups water
3/4 cup sugar
Pinch salt
About 1 quart club soda
Fresh mint for garnish

To make the ginger syrup: In a small saucepan, partially covered, simmer chopped ginger in water for 45 minutes. Remove from heat, cover, and let steep for 30 minutes. Strain through a sieve into a bowl, pressing ginger to remove all liquid. (Discard ginger.) Return liquid to saucepan. Add sugar and a pinch of salt and heat over medium heat, stirring, until sugar has dissolved. Chill.

To make a drink: Stir ginger syrup into club soda: start with 1/4 cup syrup to 3/4 cup club soda, adjust to taste. Serve over ice, with a sprig of fresh mint. Makes 3-4 cups.

Strawberry Shrub

1 cup sliced strawberries
1 cup sugar
1 cup red wine vinegar
1/2 cup mint leaves, bruised

Combine all ingredients in a medium bowl. Mash the berries to release the juice, and stir until the sugar has nearly dissolved. Refrigerate overnight. Place the fruit mixture in a nonreactive saucepan and heat gently over medium-low heat, just to dissolve remaining sugar. Strain through a mesh strainer; strain again through a coffee filter. Refrigerate. Add to sparkling water, to taste. Makes about 2 cups.

In place of strawberries, you can use any seasonal fruit: raspberries, blackberries, blueberries, peaches, mango, pineapple. Experiment with fresh "sweet" herbs, too: lemon balm, pineapple sage, scented geraniums, tarragon, basil, rosemary (but do crush rosemary leaves). And try adding spices: cloves, nutmeg, cinnamon.

Rhubarb Shrub

2 pounds rhubarb, chopped 1/4 inch thick
1 cup white wine vinegar
1 cup granulated sugar

Combine the rhubarb, white wine vinegar, and granulated sugar in a small saucepan over medium high heat, stirring as the rhubarb begins to break down. When the mixture comes to a boil, reduce heat to low and cook until the rhubarb is completely broken down into strands, about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat and pour into a colander or fine mesh strainer lined with a layer of cheesecloth. Allow the mixture to strain until it stops dripping, about 30 minutes. You can stir the mixture gently once or twice to help it strain, but do not press it through the cheesecloth. Discard the solids. Pour the resulting syrup into a jar and let cool to room temperature. Store in the refrigerator.