

Preserving Fruit Syrups and Liqueurs

Making fruit syrups and liqueurs

- Fruit syrups are made by gently cooking fruit in a small amount of water to make juice, and then combining strained juice with sweetener.
- Fruit liqueurs are made in the same way as limoncello (Italian lemon liqueur): infuse vodka by soaking with fruit for 4-30 days, strain it, and combine with simple syrup.
- Italian limoncello is made from lemons. However, the same basic recipe adapts many to other fresh, frozen and dried fruits, including rhubarb, strawberries, cherries, cranberries, and dried plums.
- Drink fruit liqueur cold and straight as they do in Italy, or use syrup or liqueur to make refreshing beverages and cocktails.
- If hard liquor is too strong for your taste, try the sangria method of infusing wine with fruit and herbs.
- **To prepare fruit:** Wash 1 pound of fruit. Slice rhubarb ¼-inch thick, cut large strawberries in half, leave firm berries whole, and pit cherries or plums.

Basic recipe for Italian style vodka fruit

liqueur: In a 1 quart glass jar or other non-reactive container (stainless or pottery), combine 1 pound prepared fruit with 1½ cups 100 proof Vodka (375 ml bottle or 12 fluid ounces). Cover, place in a cool location (or refrigerate), and let stand 4 to 30 days, or until the vodka is deeply colored. Strain and reserve the vodka. (Discard solids, or use to make syrup or jam.) In a glass bottle or jar, combine infused vodka with 1 cup simple or fruit syrup. Refrigerate up to one year.

Simple Sugar Syrup: For 1 cup simple syrup, in a medium saucepan, stir together ¾ cup water and ¾ cup granulated sugar and bring to boil over high heat, stirring to dissolve sugar completely. Reduce heat and simmer 2 minutes. Remove from heat and cool to room temperature. **Honey Simple Syrup,** in a small bowl, stir together ¾ cup honey and ¾ cup hot water until well blended. Refrigerate syrup in a glass container up to one month.

Fruit Syrup: For 1 pint syrup, in a saucepan simmer 5-10 minutes 1 pound prepared fresh fruit with ¼ cup water. Drain hot fruit in a colander set over a large bowl; let sit 30 minutes. Press solids gently to extract more juice; excessive pressing will create cloudy syrup. (Discard solids or use to make liqueur or jam.) Combine strained juice with ¾ cup sugar or ½ cup honey (or to taste). Refrigerate syrup in a glass container up to one month. For longer storage, heat syrup and keep hot while filling half-pint or pint jars to ½-inch headspace. Process half-pints or pints of fruit syrup in a boiling water canner for 15 minutes (at 0 to 1,000 feet).

Fruit infused wine: In a large pottery bowl or two 1-quart jars, stir to combine 1 bottle (750ml) dry white wine (something light and inexpensive such as Pinot Grigio or Chenin Blanc), ½ cup vodka, and 1 cup sugar (or ½ cup honey). Add 8 to 10 fresh mint sprigs and 3 cups prepared fruit. Stir gently to mix fruit and liquids. Cover and place in a cool (60-70°F), dark place for 1 to 4 days or more, stirring every other day. The wine is ready when the liquid is infused with the color of the fruit. Strain liquid through a fine mesh strainer or cheesecloth, pressing lightly to extract all of the liquid. Pour liquid into two wine bottles (or clean quart jars). Seal and refrigerate up to 4 months. Serve over ice, garnished with fruit or mint sprigs.

Non-alcoholic fruit soda or iced tea: Pour 2 ounces of fruit syrup over ice in a tall glass, and top with club soda or iced tea.

Vodka Liqueur Cocktails: Garnish cocktails with fresh fruit slices, home canned or frozen fruit, or a fresh mint sprig. **Soda Highball:** In a tall glass filled with ice, pour 2 ounces fruit liqueur, and top with club soda. **“Iced Tea” Highball:** In a tall glass filled with ice, pour 1 ounce fruit liqueur, 1 ounce dark rum, and top with club soda. **Fruit Drop Cocktail:** Shake in a cocktail shaker until frosty, 2 ounces fruit liqueur, 1½ ounces vodka, 1 ounce lemon juice, and 5-7 ice cubes. Strain into a martini glass. **Southside Cocktail:** Shake in a cocktail shaker until frosty, ¾ ounce gin or vodka, ¾ ounce fruit liqueur, juice of ½ lime or lemon, 10 mint leaves, and 5-7 ice cubes. Strain into a

