

Recipe and Documentation for
An Apple and Spice Cordial

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Recipe

Ingredients:

½ Liter Christian Brothers Frost White Brandy
1 ½ Pounds Gala Apples
2 Whole Cloves
¼ Teaspoon Ground Cinnamon
¼ Teaspoon Ground Nutmeg
¾ Cup Granulated Sugar
½ Cup Water

Dice apples into ½ inch cubes. Add brandy, apples, cloves, cinnamon, and nutmeg to 2 liter plastic container with tight fitting lid. Combine sugar and water and boil for five minutes to produce a simple syrup. Add syrup to other ingredients. Mix well. Let stand for six weeks. Strain through cheese cloth.

Documentation

Ingredients:

Spices: Cinnamon, cloves, and nutmeg had been used in Europe during Roman times but fell out of use with the lack of commerce brought about by the fall of the Roman Empire. These spices were reintroduced to Europe in the 10th century in the wave of commerce that followed the success of the 1st Crusade (McCormick 2005). Their use in flavoring cordials and other beverages can be documented most readily to 1655 (slightly out of period) in the book The Queens Closet Opened by W. M. and it is likely they were used in this way for many years prior to its writing (Lord Tadhg, 1995).

Sugar: Sugar first appears in English inventories in 1299, but is not mentioned in any English recipes until 1425. By 1430 sugar is referred to as being “white” indicating that it was being refined (Gourdon, 1998). Many recipes for cordials and other beverages found in The Queens Closet Opened and other sources list sugar as one of the ingredients and it was sometimes boiled (usually along with other ingredients) to produce a syrup that was then added to the other ingredients (Lord Tadhg, 1995).

Apples: Apples have been grown in France since the before the Roman conquest and continued to be grown there and elsewhere throughout the middle ages. They were commonly used to both produce and flavor wines and distilled liquors (Gourdon, 1998). The breed of Apples used here (Gala) is not period. Gala Apples were chosen based on their flavor and availability.

Brandy: The first “modern” brandy was distilled in 1300 at the Montpellier medical school by Arnaldus de Villa Nova. However brandy had been produced for many years prior by distilling wine (this wine could be made from any fruit, not just grapes) (Gourdon, 1998). Christian Brothers Frost White Brandy is produced using the more

modern of the techniques and is double distilled from white grapes. It was selected based on flavor, availability, and price.

Recipe:

The technique of infusing a distilled spirit with flavors which was used in this recipe was one of three common techniques used in the middle ages and documented in The Queens Closet Opened. However it was most commonly used for making spiced cordials. Fruit cordials such as this one were more commonly made by adding fruit to wine and then distilling the product (Lord Tadhg, 1995). The technique of infusing, though less accurate, was chosen due to modern legal statutes restricting distillation. The recipe I used was not copied directly from any period sources but is consistent in most respects with period techniques. Though not at all period, plastic containers were used because glass ones in the size needed were cost prohibitive. Recipes that called for the mixture to be strained were usually strained through cloth. Modern cheese cloth was used because of its availability.

Works Cited

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