

**Herb's Recommended Recipes
DIY INFUSED**

Decatur Package Store ~ 1220 Clairmont Rd ~ Decatur GA 30030 ~ 404-633-5250

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ABOUT INFUSED LIQUORS

Infused liquors are one of the easiest products to make & can be added to different food & drink recipes. For example, if making a blueberry infused liquor, gin, crushed ice, mint & tonic could be added to make a refreshing summer drink. Another idea is to make or buy orange brandy (Grand Marnier) & infuse chocolate & heavy cream to use with strawberries.

Infused liquors take about 5 days to 2 weeks to "make" & be sure to use as good a quality liquor as your budget allows.

Herbs, fruit & spices are usually used for infusions. The most popular ones are fruit based but you can also experiment with cucumber, hot pepper, basil, etc.

Make sure to use an air-tight jar when making infused liquors, try something like a mason jar. Once the jar is clean, insert the ingredients. Then fill the jar with the liquor of your choice, shake it a few times & cover with a lid, tightly.

Store infusions in a cool dark place & shake 3-5 times each day. The ingredients should stay in the liquor for 4 days to 2 weeks. If the flavors are intense to begin with try 3 days or if the flavors are less intense try 5 days. Once the infused liquor has reached its peak, use a fine strainer or coffee filter to strain the liquor into another container.

Here are some tips to use for the ingredient preparation:

Berries: wash & leave whole
Pineapple, mango, similar fruit: wash & cut into chunks
Strawberries & citrus fruit: wash & slice thinly
Vanilla beans: wash & cut lengthwise
Herbs: wash & use whole, stems & all
Peppers: wash & leave whole or cut in half
Garlic: use whole cloves, removing the outer layers of skin

An infusion can be made out of any liquor, but vodka typically has the most neutral flavor, so its least likely to clash with other ingredients. The goal of any infusion is to extract the good flavors, while leaving the bad. Typically this boils down to good timing. Some fruits take longer than others while some can be left in for a very long time. The undesirable parts of the fruit should be removed to ensure none of the bad flavors are infused.

INFUSED GIN OR VODKA

Makes 1 bottle
1 750ml bottle of gin or vodka
Spice, fruit, or herb of your choice

Get a large mouthed glass container to make an infusion. Wash anything you are using to remove all possible pesticides. Place your chosen spice, fruit, or herb in the container then add the alcohol. Close the lid and place somewhere away from direct sunlight & let it sit from four days to two weeks, follow suggestions below. Then strain & bottle.

2 weeks:
Whole chili peppers, pineapple, fresh ginger & lemongrass.
1 week:
Cantaloupes, strawberries, peaches, mangoes, pitted cherries, raspberries, blueberries, & blackberries.
4 days:
Vanilla beans, lemons, oranges, grapefruit, limes, mint, garlic, tarragon, basil, oregano, dill, & thyme.

FYI: Citrus fruit is excellent for infusions. **The best flavor is in the skins** of the fruit. You want to extract the oils from the skins & avoid using the juice or the pith.

LEMON INFUSION (LEMONCELLO)

- 4 large, thick skinned lemons
- Use the potato peeler to remove the very outer layer: avoid the white pith
- Place the peels into a jar & with 1/2 liter to 1 liter vodka
- Infusion takes less than a week

Most of the infusion will be complete after 1 week. The lemon peels can be infused for longer, if you wish. However, do not leave them in there after they have become stiff. That means there is no oil left in the skins & the process is pretty much finished.

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STRAWBERRY INFUSION

Strawberry is a bit trickier than lemons:

- Use 1 package of organic strawberries
- Slice them into quarters
- Remove the white center of each slice, anything that is not pink
- Place 1 cup of strawberry slices into a jar
- Fill the jar with 1/2 to 1 liter vodka
- Infusion takes about 1 week

These are fun to infuse, because the strawberry chunks actually **turn white** in the jar rather quickly. At this point, the infusion is pretty much complete. This yields a vodka with a powerful strawberry flavor. Oddly enough, it almost tastes artificial. You may not want to drink this one straight & it may be better mixed with other liquids to reduce the sweetness.

VANILLA INFUSION

Do not attempt this one unless you can purchase **whole vanilla beans**. The beans **must** be still goeey.

- Slice one bean in half, the short way
- Split each half the long way, using caution not to spill the seeds inside
- Place the quarters into a jar
- Fill the jar with 1/2 to 1 liter vodka
- Infusion takes 4-6 days

This infusion will quickly turn brown. The darker it gets, the better it tastes. If two beans are used instead of one, it can get quite flavorful. So much so, that it can be used as a replacement for vanilla extract in recipes.

SPICED APPLE CIDER INFUSION

- 1 teaspoon ginger
- 2 teaspoons allspice
- 1 teaspoon nutmeg
- 4 cinnamon sticks
- 1 cup simple syrup

Mix all spices with simple syrup. Place mixture in a quart glass container & fill with Smirnoff vodka. Infuse one week. Serve warmed with cider, red wine or fruit juice.