

HOMEMADE HEALING TONICS

Recipes by Gilles Marin

CHERRIES IN LIQUOR

Cherries, by themselves, are already a medicine for the blood. In Chinese medicine they recommend cherries to build health in the blood. They are recommended for menstruating women and for anemic people. Cherries are put in liquor to be available all year, especially during the cold days of winter as a blood tonic. Have one cherry a day during winter and never get sick!

For 2 lbs. of cherries with their stem, cold water cleaned and dried:

1.5 cups of unrefined brown sugar

1 quart of 40% fruit alcohol (not grain based). Use brandy if pure fruit vodka is not available.

- Divide the cherries and the sugar into pint size jars
- Top up with the 40% alcohol and shake to melt the sugar
- Keep away from light and heat for at least 3 months (not refrigerated)

After 3 months:

- You can eat as is.
- You can dip in melted chocolate and freeze to make delicious cherry bonbons.
- You can dilute the liquor in red wine, and add sugar according to your taste and keep for another month or two before drinking.

Do this in October to have your cherries ready for Christmas!

WALNUT WINE

Walnut wine has been traditionally consumed in Europe, and in France and Italy in particular, during the times of winter holidays, especially for Christmas and New Year. In the old days of no refrigeration, a lot of meats, especially pork meat, was consumed air-cured as dried sausages (salami) and ham, or smoked, and people took the habit to take vermifuges and other plant-based medicines such as walnut wine to protect themselves from infections.

For 28 green walnuts, picked up during the summer month of June or July before they start to turn brown:

6 quarts of a good red wine (8 bottles)

1 quart of fruit alcohol (vodka not made with potatoes, beets or grain) or brandy (40%)

2 lbs. of natural unrefined brown sugar

7 one-quart size dark glass canning jars

- Put the entire walnuts in a glass quart jar (preferably dark glass) and fill up with 40% organic food grade alcohol of your choice and the 2 lbs. of sugar and close the lid air-tight. Shake until the sugar is melted.
- Let sit in a cool and dry place (not the fridge) for at least 3 months.
- Divide the full contents of the jar in between the 7 one-quart jars (4 walnuts each) and top up with a good quality red wine.
- Don't add any spices or herbs that would spoil the full flavor of your walnut wine.
- Label the bottles with name, origin, maker, and most important, the date and the year.
- Every year open one or more jars, filter and pour the content into smaller bottles that you close or cork air-tight. The walnut wine can age bottled as well as in jars.

The older walnut wine gets, the better it is. After three years of age walnut wine only starts to get its full-bodied flavor. I had some 12 year old walnut wine that was better than the best port wine. If you make walnut wine every year and keep saving some bottles every year, you will be able to build your own private special reserve of old bottles for special celebrations.

Be merry and stay healthy!

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