

## LIQUEURS

If making wine or beer seems a bit complicated for you, this is the easiest of the lot. You don't even need any special equipment in most cases. The key is to balance alcohol sweetness and flavour, while avoiding synthetic overtones. Note: we do not advocate distillation at home. This is illegal without a licence and can be dangerous to health if you don't know what you're doing.

### Liqueur Types

- Fruit Base: e.g. Cointreau, Grand Marnier – these are the easiest to make. Acidity can be used to balance the sweetness
- Chocolate/Coffee Base: e.g. Tia Maria, Kahlua – usually made by blending alcohol with coffee/cocoa – flavours are more subtle
- Herb/Spice Base: e.g. Benedictine, Green Chartreuse – most difficult to produce as a balanced liqueur due to high levels of alcohol often required
- Cream Base: e.g. Bailey's – Usually made by blending – getting the right homogeneity can be a challenge.

Method	Description	Considerations
Infusion	This is a simple process to do, either steeping fruit or herbs/spices in spirit for a time and adding sugar and possibly some glycerol for sweetness and texture. The best spirits for this are vodka or gin, although whisky, rum or cheap brandy can be used in some recipes.	Can end up a bit spirit as there is little to dilute the alcohol particularly with herb/spice styles.
Flavouring Spirits	There are a number of flavourings on the market that you can just add to a spirit – usually vodka to create a liqueur	Tend to lack body. Adding some glycerol helps.
Fortifying wine	If you make your own wine, then you can use this as a base with the addition of spirit, sugar and one of the flavourings available. This works well for lower alcohol liqueurs such as apricot or cherry brandy.	Only suitable for lower levels of alcohol – needs a full bodied fruity wine with good alcohol level.
Fermentation (high alcohol kits)	This involves fermentation of a sugar water solution with turbo yeast which can give up to 20% alcohol and then adding a flavouring. These usually come in 1 gallon kits and you will need a demijohn following a similar process as for wine making. You can also add a bit of spirit at the end if you need it.	Alcohol level limited unless you add spirit, which can dilute the flavour. Can be worth reducing quantity a bit – produce 4 or 5 bottles from a 6 bottle kit (remember to adjust sugar levels).

### Links

BBC Good Food Guide has a straightforward video on making sloe gin - probably the most commonly made home liqueur

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s\\_3NOBJd1uY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s_3NOBJd1uY).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rQsakovBt2w4> shows how easy it is to make limoncello.

<https://boozedandinfused.com/> -this is a US site so it uses cups etc., but it does have some interesting ideas.

<http://www.liqueurweb.com/> is another good site for recipes.

## Recipes

### Sloe Gin

#### Ingredients

500 gm Sloes; 1 bottle Gin; 250 gm sugar; 1 tsp Glycerine

#### Method

Wash sloes and prick each of them with a needle several times. Place in a sealed container and cover with sugar, gin and glycerol. Shake at regular intervals. Once the liqueur has achieved a deep red colour, remove the sloes and leave to mature.

The fruit must be really ripe. Wait for a frost if you can. Otherwise there is too much acid. It is best to use fresh fruit as freezing will introduce extra water. You should leave the sloes in for at least 6-8 weeks. Some people advocate 3 months, other 6 months. If left for a long time you will introduce almond flavours. This nearly always benefits from lengthy maturing – at least a year if possible.

### Apricot Brandy:

300 ml strong flavoured apricot wine; 300 ml 40% vodka; 80ml brandy; 125 gm sugar;

½ bottle apricot brandy flavouring.

Just blend the ingredients, leave to mature for about 6 weeks. Check the gravity and taste and add a little more sugar if necessary.

### Parfait Amour:

40% Vodka (680ml); Sugar (450 gm); Coriander seeds (7gm); Lemon Peel (6 gm); Orange Peel (5 gm); Anise seed (3gm); Rose petals (1 gm); Glycerine (1 tbsp).

Macerate the botanicals in the vodka for 4-5 days. Strain. Add the sugar and glycerine and shake until dissolved. This pale purple, sweet and scented liqueur needs 4-6 weeks to mellow.

### Crème de Cacao:

37.5% vodka (700 ml); Sugar (450 gm); Cocoa powder (60 gm); Black Coffee (30 ml); Cinnamon (1gm); Mace (1gm); Vanilla (1 pod); Glycerine (1 tbsp).

Add cocoa powder and pulverised cinnamon and mace to the vodka and shake intermittently for two days. Allow to settle. Filter. Add freshly prepared black coffee, glycerine and sugar. Mix thoroughly. Put in the vanilla pod for 3-4 days and then remove it. Allow to mature for 2-3 months.

### Cream Liqueur

Cacao flavour (1/2 bottle); evaporated milk (400 ml); Sugar (3tsp); Water (70 ml); whisky (200 ml).

Dissolve the sugar in the boiling water and allow to cool. Blend with all the other ingredients.