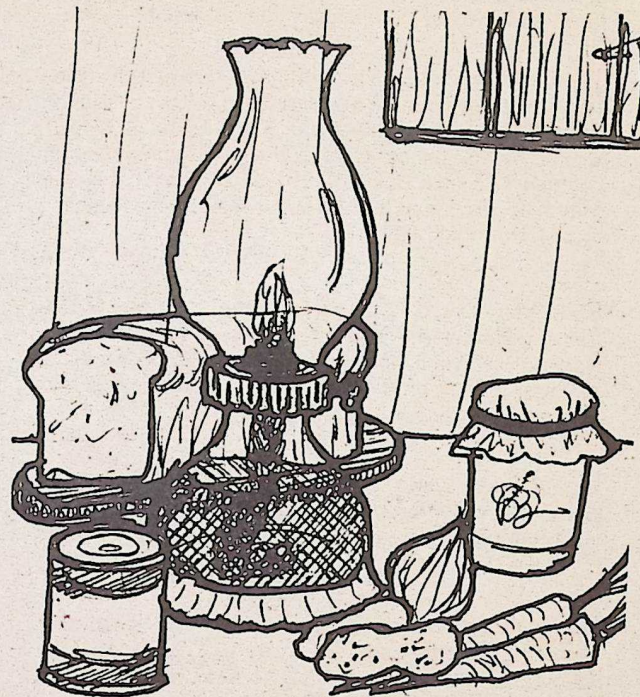


From Aunt Olivia's Kitchen

Be prepared

by Lydia Lovell



when ingredients for making cordials and liqueurs are available at reasonable prices. This is the time of year to begin them so they will have time to mellow and ripen before Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Eve are upon us.

Uncle Henry commenced even earlier than this when he planned to make **Cherry Bounce**. My brother and I gathered pails of ripe, but sour, black cherries from wild cherry trees. Uncle Henry and Aunt Olivia washed, pitted, and packed them lightly into quart mayonnaise jars. To each jar, a cup of sugar was added, then the remaining space filled with vodka. The cover was tightly screwed down and the jar up-ended and stored in a cool, dark closet for several weeks. The resulting cherry liqueur was then strained through a clean, cheesecloth-lined funnel into pint bottles with screw tops, and put away until holiday time. Sipping a tiny cordial glass of **Cherry Bounce** was a pleasant treat after Thanksgiving dinner. The cherries strained from the liqueur were packed into peanut butter jars and stored in the ice box until wanted for a sauce over vanilla ice cream.

An unusual after-dinner drink that Uncle Henry occasionally made was **Ginger Honey Cordial**. This recipe makes about a quart-and-a-half.

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| 1 T. fresh ginger root | ¼ t. coarsely ground |
| 2 cardamom pods | pepper |
| 2 whole cloves | 1 qt. brandy |
| 1½ C. honey | |

In a two-quart jar with a tight-fitting screw cap, put peeled and thinly sliced ginger root, the seeds of the cardamom pods, slightly crushed cloves, and pepper. Add brandy and cover tightly. Shake well. Store where you will remember to shake it every few days. Allow to steep for one week. At the end of

that period, filter the liquid into a clean jar, using a funnel lined with cheese cloth. Or use a coffee filter paper in the funnel. I find that works as well or better. Add honey and shake well. Cap tightly and store to mature in a cool dark place for another month. Filter again into decorative pint bottles to serve on special occasions or to give as gifts.

Coffee-flavored liqueur is popular with many people and is often called Kahlua. Uncle Henry never used that word, but his **Coffee Cordial** was as smooth and delightful as any Kahlua I've ever tasted.

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| 4 C. sugar | 1 qt. vodka |
| 2 oz. instant coffee | 1 vanilla bean, split in |
| 2 C. boiling water | half, lengthwise |

In a two-quart jar, combine sugar and instant coffee. Add boiling water, cap the bottle tightly and, holding it carefully with your hands in oven mitts, shake well until sugar is dissolved. Remove cap, add vodka and vanilla bean, and replace cap firmly. Store in a cool place; shake daily for a month. Makes half-a-gallon.

Especially for the ladies, Uncle Henry made a liqueur that pleased the most discriminating taste. He called it **Amaretto**. This recipe yields one quart.

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| 3 C. sugar | 1 t. chocolate extract |
| 2 C. water | 2 T. almond extract |
| Rind of one lemon, whole | 3 oz. brandy |
| 2 t. vanilla extract | 3 C. vodka |

In a 2-quart saucepan, bring sugar, water, and lemon rind to a boil. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer 30 minutes. Remove and discard lemon rind. Add vanilla, almond, and chocolate extracts, brandy, and vodka. Stir well, cool, and bottle. Allow to mature three weeks.

Orange Liqueur is particularly delicious served with strong black coffee after a hearty meal. Aunt Olivia prepared the fruits for Uncle Henry, but once they were ready, he took over from there.

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| 6 oranges | 1 lemon |
| 3 C. vodka | 1½ C. sugar |
| 2 whole cloves | 1½ C. water |

Peel oranges, scraping the peel clean of all pith. Chop the peels very fine and place them, with slightly crushed cloves, in a quart jar with vodka. Cover tightly and allow to stand for a week, shaking well every day. Strain through coffee filter paper. Peel the lemon, scraping the peel clean of all pith. Chop very fine. In a medium saucepan, bring water, sugar and lemon peel to a boil. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer for 30 minutes. Cool and strain into orange mixture. Add one drop of red and one drop of yellow food coloring. Seal, shake well, and store three weeks before serving.

It's never absolutely necessary, of course, to begin preparing cordials and liqueurs for the holidays all these weeks ahead of time. You can always find delicious ones at the local package store, ready to serve and guaranteed to be of excellent and consistent quality. Uncle Henry enjoyed making his own, bringing it out on special occasions, savoring the flavors, sharing the fruits of his labor with friends and family, and in particular, hearing their opinions about whether this batch was superior to that he had made a year or two ago, or whether the new recipe was better than an older one.

And we youngsters felt very grown up, indeed, when we were allowed to top our vanilla ice cream desserts with a spoonful of cherries from **Cherry Bounce**. Maybe we were all a little peculiar, but I can't think why anyone might think so.