



Fruit Liqueur (the fast way)

Here is my accelerated method for making a Berry-Flavored Liqueur in as little as 7-10 days. It involves infusing the spirit/alcohol by double steeping (rather than one long steeping) and then sweetening with a heavy sugar syrup (rather than a standard syrup).

Important Notes:

- For the spirit, I suggest you use vodka, gin or brandy.
- For this accelerated method, berries work best (strawberry, blackberry, raspberry blueberries, etc.) You can even combine 2 or more berries in one.
- Use frozen berries in the winter or fresh in the summer so that you have the best "in-season" flavor.
- When using fresh, crush the fruit first so that it releases its juice into the spirit. (Frozen will do this automatically)

There are no set measurements. Use any amount of fruit and just make sure you add enough spirit to cover it. I typically use one (12 oz) bag of frozen fruit for each steeping (or a total of two (12 oz) bags) and anywhere from 2-4 cups of spirit per batch.

- 1) **Place frozen fruit inside a clean glass container and add enough alcohol to cover the fruit.**

Some of the fruit will float to the top and that's totally okay.

If you are using fresh fruit instead of frozen be sure to CRUSH the fruit first so you get more surface area and juice coming out into the spirit.

- 2) Cover **the container with either a lid or plastic wrap plus a rubber band.**
- 3) **Set this on your countertop or in your cupboard (out of direct sunlight).**
- 4) **Stir the mixture everyday.** Stirring helps infuse the flavor.
- 5) **After about 3 days (and you can certainly go longer if you want), strain out the fruit.**

For this first straining, just strain through a colander or sieve. Don't worry about getting a clear liquid at this time.

Note: Don't throw away the strained fruit. Freeze it and use it later. It can be blended into a grown up dessert sauce or used to make a cocktail mix. It won't look very pretty and it'll be very mushy but it still has a lot of flavor.

- 6) **Add another bag of frozen fruit (or an equal amount of fresh if you are using that) to the container. Stir well.**

- 7) **Cover and sit aside as you did before. Stir it every day for 3 more days (or so).**

- 8) **Strain out the second batch of fruit.**

To get a clear liquid on this final straining, you should strain twice.

First strain through a colander or sieve to remove the large pieces of fruit. Then strain a second time through cheesecloth. If you wish to have a super clear liquid, you can strain a third time through cheesecloth, but this is optional.

Note: You could stop here and bottle up the brew as infused spirit and use it to make cocktails. But I find more people like it sweetened as a liqueur that can be both used in a cocktail or enjoyed straight.

Sweetening the Infusion:

Adding a sugar syrup transitions this from an infused spirit to a liqueur.

By using a very heavy syrup (more concentrated than a standard 1:1 syrup), you add less and do not dilute the flavor.

The syrup below is a 3:1 ratio (3 parts sugar to 1 part water). The only downside to using this syrup is that it is very thick and can burn if you are not careful. If you find this too thick or too heavy, you can always use a 2:1 syrup (2 parts sugar to 1 part water)

9) **In a small saucepan combine ½ cup water with 1 ½ cup sugar.**
Add the water to the pan first and then the sugar (so you don't burn the sugar).

10) **Over medium/low heat, cook the water and sugar until the sugar dissolves.**

The water will start to bubble and then will suddenly turn clear. When that happens, it is done. Turn off the heat and let the mixture cool to room temperature.

11) **Add a small amount of sugar syrup to your finished liqueur at a time until you reach the desired sweetness.**

The sweetness is a personal preference. Make it as sweet as you like. Start with ¼ cup, stir and taste. Then, add more if needed.

12) **Bottle up your finished liqueur into either small clean bottles OR canning jars and label it.**

Package up your finished bottles with cute ribbons and tags.

The finished liqueur will last many years on the pantry shelf but the color is most vibrant the first 6-12 months.