

Jibara

from Zabet Stewart

Difficulty

Pint

Ingredients

25 oz/750 ml Don Q® Gold rum
5 -7 Tahitian dried vanilla beans

You Will Also Need

- one 1-quart canning jar, with lid and ring
- 10"x10"/25cmx25cm square of spare muslin or fine cheesecloth
- jars or bottles for finished extract

Chef's Notes

• Don Q® is a Puerto Rican rum and isn't distributed as widely as other brands. If you have to substitute, I'd recommend Cruzan® Single Barrel.

• A good vanilla bean will be long (over 6"/15cm), pungently fragrant, and still juicy. (Yes, they are "dried" but they should be the consistency of a plump raisin.) I found several good reviews of beans bought from Vanilla Products USA, so that's where I got mine, and the beans were lovely. I chose Tahitian to keep to the Caribbean theme that was set by using rum.

Makes 25oz/750ml of vanilla extract.

Directions

Make sure your canning jar, lid, and ring are clean and dry before beginning.

Cut vanilla beans in half lengthwise. If you think the beans are too tall for the jar, you can cut them in half widthwise as well.

Add beans to canning jar. Pour rum over beans. Cap jar with lid and ring. Store in a cool, dark place and wait.

After a week you'll have some nice vanilla-flavored rum, but if you want extract, keep waiting.

Shake the jar once a week and inspect it for mold. If you find anything that shouldn't be there, pitch it and start over. If you've got no green colonies, look at the beans through the glass. When they are half dissolved, your extract is ready, though you can let it sit as long as you like so long as there are no furry patches floating on top.

Decant into the original rum bottle (if you've saved it) or container of your choice by lining a funnel with muslin or fine cheesecloth and slowly pouring the extract. This will catch all the bean debris so that you have a lovely, clear, dark liquid in your bottle. Label appropriately and use in any recipe that asks for vanilla extract.

Then clean your canning jar and start the next batch. It should be ready by the time you run out.

Variations

Using Cruzan® Black Strap rum would make a heavenly molasses-vanilla mix.

Make spiced vanilla extract by adding a few whole allspice berries, whole cloves, and a cinnamon stick. Perfect for carrot cake and gingerbread!



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