



CORDIAL RECIPES

Blackcurrant cordial

Makes about 1 litre

400g/13oz blackcurrants
1 litre/1¾ pints water
300g/10oz caster sugar

Wash the blackcurrants in cool water, but do not bother to pick over them or remove their stems. The cooked fruit is passed through a colander and so all this is left behind.

Place the washed fruit, sugar and water in a heavy-based pan, place over a medium heat and bring to a boil.

Turn down to a simmer and cook for 5 minutes or until the blackcurrants have burst and are tender.

At this point remove from the stove and pass through a colander, pressing down on the cooked berries with the bottom of a ladle to extract maximum juice.

Raspberry cordial

Makes just over 1 litre

600g/20oz raspberries
300g/10oz caster sugar
The juice of half a lemon
1 litre/1¾ pints water

Don't bother to wash the raspberries; they are too delicate for running water and will disintegrate. Pick over gently with your hands removing any other little things that sometimes find their way in.

Place in a medium saucepan, cover with the sugar, squeeze over the lemon juice and pour over the water.

Place over a medium heat and bring to a boil. Stir once or twice so that the sugar dissolves. Turn down and simmer for about 6 to 7 minutes or until the raspberries disintegrate.

Remove from the heat and allow to cool slightly. Pass through a colander to strain, pressing down on the fruit. Most of the raspberry flesh is soft enough to pass through leaving the pips behind. Allow to cool then pour into a glass vessel and place in the fridge.

Rhubarb cordial

8 sticks of rhubarb
300g/10oz English strawberries
250ml/8fl oz water
280g/8oz caster sugar

Wash and chop the rhubarb into two-inch sticks. Hull the strawberries but leave them whole. Place the rhubarb, water and sugar in a heavy-based pan and place over a medium heat and bring to a fast boil. Boil for two minutes then turn off the heat. When the heat is off, add the strawberries and let sit without the heat for 10 minutes. Strain through a colander, pressing down on the inside with a ladle to extract as much flavour as possible.

At first the liquid will be quite thin, but as you continue to press down with the ladle some of the finest pulp will work its way through the colander allowing the cordial to be slightly thicker. Pour into a sterilised vessel, allow to cool and place in the fridge.

Gooseberry and lemon verbena cordial

Pale and translucent in colour just like raw gooseberries, this cordial has a sharp and fragrant bite to it.

400g/13oz gooseberries
280g/9oz caster sugar
1 litre/1¾ pints water
6 sprigs lemon verbena

Wash the gooseberries under cold running water, then place in a pan with the sugar and water.

Bruise the lemon verbena by gently hitting it with a rolling pin or the handle of your knife. This helps to intensify and release the flavour. Place the branch in the pan and place over a medium heat.

Bring to the boil. Turn down and simmer for 10 minutes or until the gooseberries are tender.

Remove from the heat and pass through a colander pressing down firmly on the fruit as you do so to release maximum flavour.

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