

Sikanjabin

Back in the '80s this was served at SCA feasts all the time, but then it fell out of favor. It's pretty simple to make, and is especially refreshing on hot days. Modern versions add mint.

First, the version from the 13th c. Andalusian cookbook:

Syrup of Simple Sikanjabin

Take a ratl of strong vinegar and mix it with two ratls of sugar, and cook all this until it takes the form of a syrup.

Drink an uqiya of this with three of hot water when fasting: it is benefical for fevers of jaundice, and calms jaundice and and cuts the thirst, since sikanjabin syrup is benefical in phlegmatic fevers: make it with six uqiyas of sour vinegar for a ratl of honey and it is admirable.

1 ratl = 1 lb = 12 uqiyas

You can find this in Cariadoc's Miscellany and in modern Middle Eastern cookbooks. It's more a question of how much you want to make. Also, you can use different kinds of vinegar (plain white, wine, apple cider, etc) and either sugar or honey to vary it. I usually use apple cider vinegar just because I have it around and like it.

Proportions:

2 1/2 c sugar, 1 1/4 c water, 1/2 c + 2 tbps white wine vinegar, 5 large sprigs mint (20c Afghan*)

3c sugar, 1 1/2 c water, 3/4 c apple cider vinegar, big handful of mint variety (mine)

4 c sugar, 2 1/2 c water, 1 c wine vinegar, handful of mint (*Cariadoc's Misc, based on Claudia Roden's A Book of Middle Eastern Food)

The 1st one doesn't quite fill a 750 ml bottle, the 2nd does.

So, add sugar and water to a pot, dissolve the sugar over the heat, add the vinegar, and simmer for 20 to 30 minutes. Then add your mint and let cool. Strain out mint and store in a sterilized bottle - it will not spoil. To serve, water it down to taste.

Variations:

1. just mint
2. lemon balm, aka melissa officinalis (this is my fav on hot days)
3. mint, basil and hyssop
4. (read those other drink syrup recipes and experiment!)

* Afghan Food and Cookery by Helen Saberi, @ 2000, Hippocrene Books, NY NY

* Cariadoc's Misc <http://www.daviddfriedman.com/Medieval/Misc10/Misc10.pdf>