

## *Syrup of Citron Leaves: Way of Making It*

Take fifty leaves and remove the dust on them with a cloth, then cover them all with water in a pot and cook it until the strength comes out. Then take the clean part of it and add a ratl of sugar.

The bag: half an uqiya each of aloe stems, Chinese cinnamon, and cloves. Cook all this until it becomes good to drink.

Drink one uqiya with three of water. Its benefits: it cheers the heart with much gaiety, fortifies the internal organs, and softens the bowels gently; it is extraordinary.

1 ratl = 1 lb = 12 uqiyas

1 uqiya = 39 gr/ 7 tsp

\*Betty Cook tells me this should be a by weight measurement, not volume.

So, our problem here is the ingredients. First off, citron leaves. I don't have a citron tree, but a citrus tree leaf (Kaffir Lime) is used in Thai cooking, so until I grow my own tree, I use that. It is sometimes marketed as curry leaves. They look rather like bay leaves — you'll see them in Thai soups. I love their smell!

Cloves is easy. Chinese cinnamon is also called cassia. If you read a Penzey's spice catalog you'll learn about the different cinnamons.

So what is aloe stems? I figured it wasn't aloe vera, so I asked Urtatim Al-Qurtubiyya, and she pointed me to agarwood, also called oud (but I think of oud as a lute-like instrument!), sometimes called aloeswood. It's a wood of a certain tree that's been infected with a fungus so it protects itself by becoming awesome smelling resinous wood. It's used as incense and in perfume. So I went online and found multiple places selling various grades of agarwood and got the most reasonably priced I could find (plus shipping charges).

I decided to weigh everything for this recipe, even the leaves. I cut the recipe in half also. I also have the idea that spices now are fresher — we ship faster, so I halved the bag quantities.

~30 leaves (some were small) = 3 grams

Cover with 1 1/2 c water, simmer about 20 minutes, take out leaves.

Add 8 oz (less than 1 c) sugar.

aloe stems/agarwood = 5 grams

1 stick cinnamon = 5 or 6 gr

1 3/4 tsp whole cloves = 3 or 4 gr

I put the spices in a cloth bag (for tea - you could use a coffee filter also).

Simmer for 20-30 minutes. Remove bag and pour in sterilized jar. Made about 10 oz.

This seems really well balanced to me - not too much cloves. You can taste everything, but maybe my "citron" leaves were a bit small - I'd like more of them in the flavor. Be cheered!