

Syrup of Mint: Way of Making It

Take mint and basil, citron and cloves, a handful of each, and cook all this in water to cover, until its substance comes out, and add the clear part of it to a ratl of sugar.

The bag: an uqiya of flower of cloves, and cook all this until a syrup is made.

Its benefits: it frees bodies that suffer from phlegm, and cuts phlegmatic urine, fortifies the liver and the stomach and cheers it a great deal; in this it is admirable.

1 ratl = 1 lb = 12 uqiyas

1 uqiya = 7 tsp/39 grams

So, I took 5 or 6 large sprigs of both mint and basil, about 20 leaves of Kaffir lime (also sold as curry leaves), and 1 large Tbsp of whole cloves. I added 4 c of water to just cover, and simmered about 20-30 minutes, until the leaves turned olive, then strained them out. I then added 2 cups of sugar and simmered again.

Of course, store syrup in a sterilized bottle, and add to water to taste.

Ingredient problems:

I use Kaffir lime leaves for now as it's the closest I can get to citron leaves — they are used in Thai food, especially soup — look like bay leaves but don't taste like that.

That "flower of cloves" is an issue. One year I added a bag of ground cloves (interpreting the flower as flour) and it made the syrup too clove. I now think that perhaps the ingredient meant is a dianthus flower, also sometimes called gillyflower or clove flower. It's related to carnations, but not the modern ones.