

Syrup of Harir (Mulberries): way of Making It

Take the almonds of silk (fruit of mulberries) and extract from them the small seeds, after removing their hearts, four ratls. Then divide the fruit and clean the dirt from them, wash them very well in cold water until softened, and drain the water. Then take water out of a river oriented Eastward; heat polished steel and cool it in this water until the water is reduced by half and changes color. Cook the harir [the cleaned fruit] in this water until its substance comes out; press it [filter it], and add to the water three ratls of honey cleaned of its foam.

The bag: half a uqiya each of cinnamon and cloves, an uqiya of ginger, an uqiya each of cubebs, long pepper and galingale. Then pound roots and put them in a bag, which is then tied with a strong thread and added to the honey and filtered essence. Put it on the fire and cook it until a syrup is made.

Drink two uqiyas of this with three of hot water. It profits in the lack of urine, and increases desire well; it dissolves the fat from all parts of the body and heats it well, God willing, by its generosity and virtue.

1 ratl = 1 lb = 12 uqiyas

1 uqiya = 7 tsp/39 grams

So, original proportions: 4 lbs of mulberries, water ??, 3 lbs of honey

What I did: cut that down to 1 lb of mulberries, rinsed them, covered with 2 1/2 cups of water and simmered for 20 minutes. I strained that, then decided there was more goodness in the berries, so added another cup of water to the strained mulberries and repeated (ie simmered, then strained - I just used a regular strainer). To the strained juice I added 12 oz (3/4 lb) of old honey.

Now for the spices — this entailed lots of math. I have the idea that spices were not as strong and fresh then as they are now, so I tried to cut them in 1/8 rather than in 1/4. I still think it tasted more of the spices than the berries, so next time I'll try to pick double the mulberries or cut back the spices some more. (Hey, it was yummy - the boys were drinking it up.)

6 long peppers = 1 tsp

1 tsp cubeb berries

1/2 tsp cloves

These were whole; I ground them together in a spice grinder. Preground, I had:

1/2 tsp cinnamon

1 tsp galingal

1 tsp ginger

I put them all in a coffee filter and tied it with a string. Into the pot, then simmer some more (I didn't note how long this time, sorry). Finally I filtered it again using a smaller mesh into a sterilized bottle. It made about 750 ml.

It makes a fabulous dark purple color, which we've decided actually looks and tastes better when added to cold almond milk rather than water. Spicy medieval smoothie!