

Recipes from Nuts 'n May

Nocino

Nocino is an Italian liqueur made with green walnuts, these are unripe walnuts that are more like big olives (it's important you pick them before they start to form shells inside the green husk). In New Zealand, the time to make liqueurs (or pickle walnuts) is in December.

Avoid drinking immature Nocino, even when full ripe it's a strong and acquired taste... but it does work very well in cooking (it's the secret ingredient in our beef brisket). A small nip or will also warm you on a cold day.



Ingredients

150	Green walnuts	4 whole	Cinnamon sticks
5 liters	Vodka	25 whole	Cloves
2.5 kg	Caster sugar	1 whole	Vanilla pod
		5 whole	Star anise pods
		5 med	Lemons

Method

Pick your walnuts from the tree and select the best unblemished ones, rinse and pat them dry. Cut the green walnuts into quarters with a sharp knife (they should be soft). Be careful as you are cutting them; if you've waited too late in the season to pick them, their shells may have begun to harden, discard any that are hard.

Using a zester (or peeler) zest the lemon rind.

Put the walnuts, spices, zest, sugar, and alcohol into a sterile food grade plastic bucket. The alcohol should cover the walnuts, still well and seal the bucket with its lid

It will take 6 months for the liqueur to take on its distinctive black green colour (and flavour), you check it and should gently swirl the bucket every month during this period. After 6 months, strain the liqueur and leave to cure for another 6 months).

After a year you can strain it again (use cheesecloth this time) and bottle in sterile glass bottles, cap well and leave another 3 to 6 months to cure.