

Elderberry Nice

Elderberry Nice: Dark Rum, Cacao and Forest Elderberry Liqueur



Elderberry Nice began with dark clusters of elderberries gathered from the forest nearby, their deep colour and earthy fruitiness calling for something warmer than a traditional vodka infusion. Dark rum became the natural base, bringing caramel and molasses notes that settle comfortably alongside the berries. Muscovado sugar and honey deepen the sweetness, while cacao nibs and a few coffee beans introduce a subtle roasted edge. Vanilla, allspice and cinnamon provide gentle warmth without turning the liqueur overly spicy. The result is dark, fruity and quietly indulgent — a woodland liqueur with a mischievously friendly name.

Ingredients

- Elderberries — 700 g
- Dark Rum — 700 ml
- Muscovado Sugar — 160 g
- Honey — 40 g
- Cacao Nibs — 12 g
- Vanilla — ¼ pod
- Allspice — 3 berries
- Cinnamon — ⅓ stick
- Coffee Beans — 6 beans



Preparation

1. Sort the elderberries carefully, removing all stems, leaves, unripe berries and damaged fruit. Rinse gently in cold water, then drain and dry thoroughly.
2. Freeze the cleaned elderberries overnight, then allow them to thaw completely. This helps break down the fruit and encourages faster colour and flavour extraction during the relatively short maceration.
3. Place the thawed elderberries in a large sterilised glass infusion jar. Gently crush roughly one-quarter of the berries to release their juice while leaving the remainder intact.
4. Add the muscovado sugar and honey, then gently rotate the jar to distribute them through the fruit.
5. Add the cacao nibs, split vanilla pod, lightly crushed allspice berries, cinnamon stick and whole coffee beans.
6. Pour in the dark rum, ensuring the elderberries and aromatics are submerged. Seal the jar tightly and store in a cool, dark place.
7. Gently rotate the jar once a day during the first week to help dissolve the sugar and encourage even extraction. After the first week, rotate it gently every few days.
8. Begin tasting after two weeks, paying particular attention to the coffee, cinnamon, allspice and cacao. Remove individual aromatics early if they begin to dominate, while leaving the elderberries to continue infusing.
9. Macerate for a total of four weeks. Strain thoroughly, gently pressing the fruit to recover the liquid without crushing the seeds excessively. Filter until clear, bottle, and allow the finished liqueur to rest for as long as possible before serving.