

Sloe Gin and Vodka

Contributed by jema

An ideal introduction to the pleasures of home brewing, even if no actual brewing occurs.

Sloe Gin is a quite wonderful drink and simple to make. Home made Sloe gin can compete with any commercial liquor for flavour, and can be ready for drinking in two months.

A lot of recipes seem to over complicate the making of Sloe Gin, and even say you should wait a year or two before drinking it.

But in my opinion Sloe Gin needs few of the suggested complications.

Firstly pick your Sloes, no need to wait for the first frost, as recipes sometimes say. Sloes the fruit of the Balckthorn bush, are traditionally picked late October. However in 2004 they were pretty much ready early September. So look sharp and don't miss the boat.

The Sloes should then be frozen for a week or two, this along with pricking the Sloes is reputed to stimulate the release of the flavours.

After two weeks the Sloe should be individually pricked with a fork or skewer and placed in an airtight container in the proportions:

1 Litre spirit (Gin or Vodka are best, but Brandy or Whiskey may be tried)
1lb Sloes.
8oz Suger.

Leave for two months, shaking occasionally.

Filter into bottles through layers of muslin.

The Sloes can then be used to make wonderful homeade ice cream, and the bottles of Sloe Gin can be drunk immediately, or left to mature. We have always made the effort to wait until Christmas at least.