

How to Infuse Spirits

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What's our favorite part about infusing spirits with fresh herbs, spices, fruits, and vegetables, you ask? Creativity is king (or queen). In our no-recipe guide to seasonal cocktail heaven, let your tastebuds lead the way.



When Eataly Magazine decided to infuse our own spirits, we turned to the experts at Eataly Vino, our wine shop (with quite a selection of Italian and other liquors) in New York. The results? Delicious drinks for days! Join us as we dive into the world of infusion with recommended pairings and subsequent cocktails from our spirits guides (!) along the way.

WHAT YOU NEED

Vodka, or another spirit
Fresh herbs, spices, fruits, and/or vegetables
Large air-tight container
Strainer, optional

HOW TO INFUSE SPIRITS

1. Sterilize. Be sure that your container is as clean as possible, or your infusion risks going sour.
2. Choose the spirit. While vodka is often a go-to base because of its neutral taste, you can infuse whiskey, gin, and everything in between. If you're new to infusion, though, we recommend sticking to the light liquors. Quality counts here, so choose a well-respected brand!

For our first attempt, our experts recommended ISpirit Vodka.

3. Get cheffy. Like a chef creating a new dish, consider what ingredients are in season and pair well together. Quantity is up to you as well; just remember that the stronger the flavor of the ingredient, the stronger infusion. For example, our experts suggested less than one chili pepper for one bottle but four lemons for another. After deciding on your combination, select the freshest options available, then wash and chop.

We made two batches: Peach Ginger Vodka and Rosemary, Cucumber, Lemon, and Thyme Vodka.

4. Combine. Pour the spirit into a large air-tight container, add your flavoring, and screw the lid on tightly.

Since we're new to the infusion process, we split our bottle of ISpirit vodka between two mason jars. For the former batch, we used three ripe, sliced peaches and two tablespoons of freshly-sliced ginger. For the latter, we used two organic lemons (aromatic rinds and all) cut into wedges, two sprigs of rosemary, two sprigs of thyme, and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of diced cucumbers.

5. Shake, sip, and wait. Gently shake your infusion twice a day. After two days, take a sip. If the flavor isn't to your preference, let time do its thing until your daily taste test scores aces.

We didn't hate this part of our job.

6. Strain. Once your infusion has reached its peak flavor, pour it through a fine strainer into a clean jar.

...or just straight into a pitcher of cocktails.

7. Cocktail o'clock. Enjoy your new infused spirits on the rocks or as a mixer in a wholly unique drink.

Peach Ginger Spritzer, anyone? We combined two ounces of the first infused vodka with seltzer and garnished with a slice of fresh peach for an incredibly refreshing drink that made us cheers to summer.

With our second vodka, we made a Bloody (Rose)Mary with two ounces of the infused vodka, a dash of horseradish, a dash of Worcestershire, a pinch of celery salt, and cracked black pepper, all shaken with ice and garnished with a sprig of parsley. Note: this cocktail will push your brunch party over the edge.



Salute!

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