

Stacy Uncorked's Homemade Kahlua

The Recipe:

9	cups sugar
9	cups fresh brewed coffee*
9	cups vodka and brandy (I use a 1.75 liter bottle of vodka, then top off the rest with brandy*).
9	teaspoons vanilla extract (or 6-9 vanilla beans split)

***Note:** 1.75 Liters = 7.396817473844285 Cups – Top off remainder of 1.75L Vodka with Brandy to equal final 3 cups for recipe.

Most of the recipes you find call for freeze-dried instant coffee. I don't particularly care of the taste of instant coffee, so I created a recipe that incorporates good coffee to enhance the taste.

This is the coffee I started using the last few times that really makes delicious coffee, which translates to delicious Kahlua:



One of the secrets to making the best Kahlua is to use 100% Arabica coffee – just pick one that you really like the taste and aroma of and you'll have a winner.

Brew coffee, then pour into large pot while still hot and add sugar. Stir thoroughly until sugar dissolves completely:



Let cool to room temperature (you may add vanilla beans now if you like extra vanilla taste in your Kahlua – if you don't have vanilla beans and are using vanilla extract, don't add that yet).

Madagascar Vanilla Beans are highly recommended. Carefully split them down the middle:



Any 'seeds' that cling to the knife or get on the cutting board make sure you add that to the coffee/sugar mixture, too:



Gently stir into the coffee/sugar mixture:



Let cool completely to room temperature. When you add the vanilla beans while the mixture is still warm, the vanilla infuses a little stronger/faster/better.

Once completely cooled to room temperature, carefully stir vodka and brandy into the mix. You don't want to add the liquor when the coffee/sugar mixture is hot, it will 'cook off' the alcohol from the vodka and brandy...you want to keep that alcohol content!

When choosing Vodka for your Kahlua, don't skimp and go cheap. Rule-of-thumb is to choose one that is smooth tasting, the cheap versions tend to be harsh and leave an after-taste. You want your Kahlua to be smooth, right?

Since I'm Swedish, I generally lean towards the Swedish Vodka, but whenever our local liquor store has Russian Vodka on special (and has the preferred alcohol content), that's what I'll get.

Same thing goes for the Brandy – I've tried various brands of Brandy in the Kahlua, but for some reason E&J Brandy seems to be the perfect flavor that doesn't overpower the Kahlua as a whole:



If you haven't already added the vanilla beans, do so now. If you don't have vanilla beans, use *real* vanilla extract and stir in with the vodka and brandy. I cannot stress enough that you do not want to use 'imitation' vanilla extract. Why? Imitation vanilla is highly inferior to *pure* vanilla.

Did you know that it isn't even made from *real* vanilla? It's completely composed of artificial flavors which are mostly by-products of the *paper* industry. They can be made from a substance called glycoside which is actually found in the sap of certain conifers. Sometimes, it is even made from *coal* extracts. This explains why the flavor of imitation does not even resemble the pure vanilla flavor. It can leave a very bitter aftertaste on the tongue. You don't want your Kahlua to have a bitter aftertaste, right?

If you've added vanilla beans after the brew has cooled, let sit for 24-48 hours to let the vanilla infuse. I'll let the mix sit overnight or two so the vanilla beans can infuse with the added liquor, too. Taste test along the way until you like how it tastes.

Once you've achieved the taste you want, remove the vanilla beans and transfer your Kahlua to wine or liqueur bottles and cork – you can also add vegetable glycerin to the concoction if you want the consistency to be a bit 'thicker' like the store bought.

Instead of regular corks, I use T-corks (aka tasting corks) so people won't have to use a wine opener to open the bottle, and can re-cork the bottle easily.

The Kahlua is drinkable immediately, or let sit for a month (or more) in a cool, dark place to let the flavors *really* become enhanced. The longer it sits in a cool, dark place, the smoother it gets. Its shelf-life is indefinite, due to the high alcohol content. Stash a bottle for a special occasion years down the road – you'll be glad you did.