

## Orange bitters

MAKES 5 CUPS | 1 HOUR, PLUS ABOUT 3 WEEKS TO INFUSE

The bitter component is gentle here; what comes through is a warm, sweet spice infusion that's excellent in an old-fashioned cocktail or stirred into a cup of mulled wine. *(Note: It's illegal to ship spirits in the U.S.)*

- 2 oranges
- 1 bottle (750 ml.) Everclear\* (grain alcohol)
- 10 cardamom pods
- 2 whole star anise pods
- 3 cinnamon sticks (each 2½ in.)
- 1 tsp. whole cloves
- 1 tbsp. plus 1 tsp. chopped fresh ginger
- 1 cup sugar

1. **Preheat** oven to 250°. Remove zest from oranges with a vegetable peeler and put zest on a baking sheet (save fruit for another use). Bake until zest dries, starts to curl up, and begins to brown, 20 to 25 minutes. Let cool.

2. **Put** all ingredients except sugar in a 1-qt. glass jar and seal tightly. Let sit in a cool, dark place for 2 weeks.

3. **Strain** liquid through cheesecloth into a 1½- to 2-qt. glass jar (save flavorings) and set aside. Put flavorings in a small saucepan with 2 cups water. Cover and bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer 10 minutes. Set aside.

4. **Cook** sugar in a small saucepan over medium-high heat, lifting and shaking pan occasionally, until sugar caramelizes and turns deep amber, 8 to 10 minutes. Pour caramel into liquid in pan (it will bubble furiously and may firm up). If needed, return pan to medium heat and cook, stirring, for a few minutes until caramel melts again.

5. **Set** pan in a bowl of ice water until liquid is cold, about 10 minutes. Pour into jar with first infusion. Seal and let stand in a dark place 5 days.

6. **Strain** final mixture through cheesecloth into a glass measuring cup and discard flavorings. Divide bitters into small jars and seal tightly.

\*Find at liquor stores.

**Make ahead:** Up to 1 year, chilled.

**Bottle it:** 7.5-in. clear glass bottle, \$3.99; [save-on-crafts.com](http://save-on-crafts.com)

**PER 1-TBSP. SERVING** 36 CAL., 0% (0.1 CAL.) FROM FAT; 0 G PROTEIN; 0 G FAT; 1.3 G CARBO (0.1 G FIBER); 0.1 MG SODIUM; 0 MG CHOL.

## Lemon vodka

MAKES 3½ CUPS  
10 MINUTES, PLUS 1 WEEK TO INFUSE

You can make this infusion with almost any combination of citrus fruit and liquor, but this one and the two that follow are our favorites. Even better: You don't need the best-quality alcohol; the key is using something that's smooth and neutral in flavor. Try the infusion over ice or in your favorite cocktails. *(Note: It's illegal to ship spirits in the U.S.)*

- 2 lemons
- 1 bottle (750 ml.) vodka

1. **Remove** zest from lemons with a vegetable peeler and save fruit for another use. Put zest in a 1-qt.\* glass jar or decorative bottle. Pour in vodka (through a funnel, if the bottle has a narrow opening).

2. **Close** jar tightly and put in a cool, dark place for 1 week.

3. **Chill** vodka and serve cold; it will take on the color of the zest and will gradually intensify in flavor and get a little cloudy.

\*You can use a smaller bottle, but the infusion will be stronger, so taste it occasionally and remove the zest when the liquor tastes the way you want.

**Make ahead:** Up to 3 months (1 year, strained), chilled.

**Bottle it:** 34-oz. Giara hermetic bottle, \$8.99; [containerstore.com](http://containerstore.com)

**PER 2-TBSP. SERVING** 67 CAL., 0% FROM FAT; 0 G PROTEIN; 0 G FAT; 0.1 G CARBO (0.1 G FIBER); 0.3 MG SODIUM; 0 MG CHOL.

## Tangerine gin

Follow recipe for Lemon Vodka (preceding), but use 2 large tangerines instead of lemons and gin instead of vodka.

## Lime tequila

Follow recipe for Lemon Vodka (preceding), but use 4 limes instead of lemons and silver tequila instead of vodka. Note: The zest will lose its color almost immediately, but will continue to give flavor to the tequila.

## Candied citrus peels

MAKES 4½ CUPS | 2 HOURS, PLUS 2 DAYS TO DRY

Blanching the peels three times helps remove their bitterness. The peels are delicious on their own, but dipping them in chocolate makes them extra-special.

- 1 pink grapefruit
- 2 oranges
- 2 lemons
- 3½ cups sugar, divided

1. **Score** grapefruit, oranges, and lemons through peel from top to bottom in 6 sections for grapefruit and 4 for oranges and lemons (don't cut into fruit.) Pull off strips of peel with your fingers. Slide a small, sharp knife along inside of peels to remove excess membrane so peels are about ¼ in. thick. Cut peels lengthwise into strips about ½ in. wide in center and tapered on ends.

2. **Put** peels in a 3- to 4-qt. saucepan and add cold water to cover. Bring to a boil, then drain. Repeat twice more.

3. **Refill** pan with 2½ cups water and 2½ cups sugar; bring to a boil, making sure that sugar dissolves. Add peels and bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer gently, stirring occasionally, until peels turn translucent and syrup begins to form bigger bubbles, about 1½ hours.

4. **Drain** peels, saving syrup for other uses (such as topping pancakes) if you like. Spread peels on a nonreactive cooling rack set on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Let peels dry overnight.

5. **Put** remaining 1 cup sugar in a bowl and toss peels in sugar by the handful, shaking off excess. Put peels on a clean baking sheet and let them dry 1 more day.

## FRESH DELIVERY

Your top sources for the classic holiday gift: citrus in a box.

### MANDARIN HILL ORCHARDS

Some of the best mandarins, lemons, and grapefruits (including our favorite, the rare heirloom white Marsh variety) come from this solar-powered Northern California orchard. [mandarinhillorchards.com](http://mandarinhillorchards.com)

**RIPE TO YOU** The mixed boxes from this farm in California's San Joaquin Valley let you sample all kinds of treats from its 40 varieties, from Bergamot oranges to yuzus. Does not ship to Arizona. \* [ripetoyou.com](http://ripetoyou.com)

**SNOW'S CITRUS COURT** This family-run orchard in the Sierra Foothills specializes in Satsuma mandarins, Meyer lemons, limes, pummelos, kumquats, and blood oranges. Does not ship to Arizona. \* [snowscitrus.com](http://snowscitrus.com)

**SHANLEY FARMS** One of the West's few sources for the exotic Australian finger lime, grown in Morro Bay and Visalia, CA. [shanleyfarms.com](http://shanleyfarms.com) —ELAINE JOHNSON AND JOHANNA SILVER

\*Parts of Arizona and Southern California are under a USDA quarantine to prevent the spread of a crop-destroying pest called the Asian citrus psyllid (more info. [cdffa.ca.gov/phpps/acp](http://cdffa.ca.gov/phpps/acp)). The restrictions affect transport of fresh citrus only.

6. **Serve** peels plain or dipped in chocolate.\*

\*Melt 10 oz. chopped bittersweet or semisweet chocolate in a small pan over barely simmering water. Dip peels halfway into chocolate; set on baking sheets lined with waxed paper. Chill until set, about 30 minutes.

**Make ahead:** Up to 3 months, chilled airtight.

**Box it:** Crystal clear boxes, from \$6.25/25; [clearbags.com](http://clearbags.com)

**PER 2-TBSP. SERVING** 96 CAL., 0% FROM FAT; 0 G PROTEIN; 0 G FAT; 25 G CARBO (1.1 G FIBER); 27 MG SODIUM; 0 MG CHOL. ■