

Home-Made Bailey's Irish Cream

I make gallons of this stuff every Christmas, and pour it into quart jars. A jar of this delightful concoction makes a lovely gift for a neighbor or friend. I found the original recipe* in a Keweenaw cookbook, from St. Paul's church. Yooper church cookbooks are great, and, with the exception of the apostolic ones, seem to have a very large drinks section.....

Ingredients:

- 1 can sweetened condensed milk
- 1 cup half-and-half
- 4 eggs
- 2 T chocolate syrup
- 2 t instant coffee
- 1 t vanilla extract
- 1/2 t almond extract
- 1 cup vodka (cheapest variety)

Directions:

1. Place all the ingredients except the vodka in a blender. Blend. Allow the mixture to settle a bit (it gets quite frothy).
2. Add vodka to taste and strength desired; I use 1 cup vodka per 3 cups mixture. (I pour 1 cup of vodka, the cheapest bulk vodka I can find, into each mason jar, and then top up with the mixture. This makes a fairly potent drink.)

This ration of mix to vodka produces a fairly potent liqueur; you could make it less potent, but I can't guarantee that the vodka will be enough to preserve it properly.

The jars can be stored just like any other liqueur. The vodka preserves the eggs and keeps them from going bad. I used to refrigerate the jars, until I realized that my mom had been keeping her sin the liqueur cabinet for years with no ill consequences.

The Bailey's is tastiest when served cold, either from the refrigerator or over ice. It is delicious in coffee or, over ice cream or even, as my friend Kiran taught me, mixed with diet cola.

* The original recipe called for whiskey as the alcoholic ingredient. I replaced it with vodka because I am Ukrainian, and because it tastes much, much better.