



Clove-Spiced Champagne

The flavors and fragrances of this champagne are elegant and timeless, with a generous hint of spice, echoing the flavors of a mulled wine. The spiced syrup can be made well in advance, and its flavors will intensify as it rests.

Yields enough syrup for one bottle of champagne or sparkling wine

Ingredients

4 cups apple or white grape juice
1 teaspoon whole cloves, crushed
1 teaspoon crystallized ginger, chopped
½ teaspoon allspice berries, crushed
2 tablespoons orange zest, pith completely removed
¼ of one whole vanilla bean, left intact

1 bottle of dry champagne or sparkling wine
4x4" square of cheesecloth
Kitchen twine

Preparation

Prepare the spice sachet:

Place all of the spices, zest and vanilla bean segment into a sachet made from a double thickness of standard cheesecloth. Tie it off with kitchen twine.

Prepare the spiced syrup:

In a small sauce pan, heat 4 cups of either the apple or white grape juice over medium-high heat until just beginning to boil. Place the sachet into the juice, reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer until reduced by about half (20-30 minutes). Remove from heat and allow to cool for 15 minutes. Remove the sachet, squeezing all the juice from the bundle. Pour the syrup through a fine mesh sieve into a clean glass container. Allow to completely cool. Cover and refrigerate until ready to use. The syrup will become thicker as it cools.

Service

To serve, add 1 part spiced syrup to 2 parts champagne or sparkling wine.

[Chef's Note: If you don't want to fuss with a sachet, simply toss all of the mulling spices into the pan with the juice and proceed with the recipe. When you strain the syrup, strain it through cheesecloth or a coffee filter to catch the fine sediment of the spices.]

When selecting your champagne or sparkling wine, remember that there is a bit of sweet to the spiced syrup. If you want a dry, elegant cocktail we recommend using a Brut champagne or sparkling wine. If you intend to use this recipe as an aperitif or as an after-dinner toast, a sweeter, extra-dry champagne may be more to your liking.]

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