

Bay leaf liqueur

After sampling the most delicious, dark and bitter liqueur at the end of our (fantastic) lunch at Trattoria Le Zie in Lecce, Puglia, we had to try making it ourselves. After some research and then the good fortune of finding a tree-load of fresh bay leaves on Freecycle, this was the result. It worked beautifully.



100 large fresh and beautiful bay leaves, washed

1 litre good vodka

pared zest two smallish unwaxed lemons

2 cinnamon sticks

2 fat cloves

sugar

1. Put everything in a jar, seal and leave for one to two months.
2. Strain. Make a simple syrup by dissolving one part sugar in one part water. Let cool. Dilute the bay infusion with the simple syrup to taste. Keep it quite strong and quite bitter. Bottle and leave for another one to two months.
3. Strain or decant again if needed. Best served slightly chilled at the end of a big meal.