

## Citrus and vanilla infused bourbon

*This 'recipe' comes from Scott Beattie, the talented barman at the Cyrus restaurant bar in Healdsburg, California, who is reputed to be the best 'mixologist' in America. After we'd worked our way through most of his cocktail menu, he happily divulged his bourbon-infusing secrets...*



- 1 bottle of your favourite bourbon whiskey
- 1 large beautiful orange
- 1 large beautiful lemon
- 2 fresh vanilla pods (ie squishy, not brittle)

1. Empty bottle into a large container so the liquid has a large surface area.
2. Holding the fruit over the top, peel off all the zest of the orange and the lemon, so that the bourbon catches not only the zest but also the oils that are sprayed out. Be careful to only get the zest, not the bitter white pith underneath. Use one of those zesters used in bars that peel off long, thin, curly strips for garnishes. NB You may need to bash its blade against the tabletop so that it doesn't peel too deeply. Or use a vegetable peeler.
3. Score and open up vanilla pods along their lengths so that seeds are exposed. Add these to bourbon. Pour it all back into the bottle using a funnel. You may need to push the pod and peels in with your fingers.
4. Let sit for at least two weeks, occasionally gently shaking, before drinking.

### Whisk(e)y facts:

- So what is whiskey? And rye and bourbon for that matter? A whiskey is a spirit distilled from fermented grain(s) and then aged in barrels. They vary from place to place by blend of grains used, number of distillations, types of barrel used, ageing time and temperature, filtration method, ingredients added, and much more.
- Scotch and Irish whiskey tends to be made from malted and unmalted barley, whereas American and Canadian whisky is usually made mainly from maize (corn).
- Bourbon is the most prominent corn whiskey, named after a county in Kentucky which was blessed with ample corn and water in colonial times. Bourbon is made from a 'mash' that is mainly maize, with some malted barley and a little rye or wheat. It is aged in new, charred American oak barrels, which give it a deeper colour and stronger vanilla note than Scotch. Unlike Canadian whisky, bourbon cannot be sweetened, coloured or flavoured; the only addition allowed is water.

- Rye is an American whiskey made, unsurprisingly, of at least 51% rye. Many Canadian whiskies are also called 'rye', despite containing very little rye these days. American rye whiskey tends to be drier, bitterer, more peppery, and, I think, grassier, than bourbon.
- A note on spelling: In Scotland, Wales and Canada it's 'whisky'; in Ireland and America it's 'whiskey'. If Wales was spelt Wails (or Cymru, even), it would be easy to work out which countries use the 'e' and which don't.
- 'Whisky' derives from the Gaelic word for 'water' ('uisce' or 'uisge'), and is called in full '*uisge-beatha*' (in Scotland) or '*uisce beatha*' (Ireland), meaning 'water of life'.

Sources:

*On Food and Cooking*, Harold McGee, 2004

[www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)