

Title:

Distillation From Fruit

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Summary:

There is practically no variety of fruit that cannot be enjoyed in alcoholic form, from cactus fruits from the desert or berries from the Arctic

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Article Body:

There is practically no variety of fruit that cannot be enjoyed in alcoholic form, from cactus fruits from the desert or berries from the Arctic. But not all varieties of fruit are equally suitable for producing spirits. It depends greatly on the fruit's sugar content.

Eau-De-Vie

This term is French for "water of life," and includes a wide range of colorless fruit brandies. Stone fruit, such as cherries, plums, apricots, and peaches, are most frequently used, but berries also flavor some of the best-known eau-de-vie. The fruits generally have so much natural sugar that the mash reaches 40 percent alcohol content by Volume, or 80 proof, during fermentation, so extra sugar is needed. ()ne of the best-known examples is kirsch, or French cherry eau-de-vie, also called Kirschwasser in Germany. It is produced from fully ripe fermenting cherries or from their juice, without any additional sugar and alcohol.

Plums are another popular ingredient for flavoring eau-de-vie across europe. In Alsace, for example, blue plum eau-de-vie is called quetsch. In Germany, Zwetschgenwasser and Pflaumenwasser respectively are produced from ripe or fermenting blue or red plums. Mirabellenwasser is a spirit distilled from ripe yellow plums in Germany without the addition of extra sugar and alcohol.

Eaux-de-vio made from quinces and apricots are also enjoyed, low-sugar fruits, such as raspberries, blackberries, and black currants, are at the heart of some equally popular eaux-de-vie. Their low-sugar content, however, means alcohol must be added to them before distillation, otherwise fermentation will not take

place. Framboise, from France, has a mild, sweetish taste. Cassis, made from black currants, is combined with white wine to make Kir, the popular aperitif originally from Burgundy.

Poire William is an aromatic eau-de-vie, distilled from Williams pears. It has a soft flavor and a sweetish scent, liopical fruit eaux-de-vie are produced from bananas, mandarins, mangoes, passion fruit, and papayas.

Other Fruit Spirits

Another well-known fruit spirit is Calvados, an apple brandy made horn the cider produced in Normandy in France. Under French law, the name "Calvados" can only be applied to distillations of cider \vhich come from 11 specific areas. After distillation, Calvados is .lored in oak or chestnut barrels and matured for at least two years. I he older Calvados is, the more velvety and aromatic its taste.

The color is amber to cognac brown. Calvados is a perfect digestive. calvados producers use a labeling system, similar to those on cognac and Armagnac, to indicate how long the spirit has aged in oak barrels. Three stars means at least two years; Vieux, Reserve, at least 3 years; V.O, Vieille Reserve, or V. S. O. P, at least 4 years; Extra or X. O, Napoleon, Hor's d'Age, and Age Inconnu, at least 6 years.

Other apple spirits, which can not be labeled as Calvados, are known as eau-de-vie de pomme, apple brandy, or aquarediente di sidre in Spain. In the United States, applejack is a domestic example of an apple brandy from Austria and Germany, Obstler is made from freshly fermented tipples or pears, or a combination of both. The fruit variety must be listed on the label, and most brands are between 80 and 100 proof.