

Southern Sindhi Comfort

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SINDHI DARU The Sindhi Kings' Beverage of Choice

Flavored and infused liquors are trendy now, but they are not new. Long before they were even a blip on the radar, the Kings of Sindh made their own - Sindhi Daru. Much like wine, scotch and brandy, Sindhi Daru has interesting and complex flavor profiles that are a reflection of its history and its makers. Because of its location at the intersection of the Silk trade route and the Spice trade route, Sindh and its residents were very cosmopolitan and had refined palates, so in true Sindhi style, we used the world's most expensive spices and herbs like cardamom and saffron to flavor our unique craft style artisan beverage.

Grain alcohol has never tasted good – so the speculation is that Sindhis flavored it to make it taste better. The use of gin became prevalent during the British occupation – it was a natural transition because of the aromatics used in the production of gin. Each family has its own formula and recipes were carefully guarded secrets and were passed on from one generation to the next. Because it is traditionally made with aromatics, sugar and dried fruit, batches were commonly 'hidden & forgotten' to be 'discovered & enjoyed' months or years later. We tend to be purists now - the base should be a pure product, like vodka, because it isn't produced with aromatics, thereby enabling us to create our own proprietary flavor profile.

How do you make your own batch? Before beginning, remember that dry ingredients are concentrated, so a little bit goes a long way. Also, resist the temptation add too many ingredients because you want to be able to taste the various flavors you've added. *Do not use fresh ingredients as they will ferment and ruin your Daru!* Ready to start? Here's how:

- Make sure you're in a good mood and think about the great times you'll have savoring your Sindhi Daru in a few months!
- As your base, use an unflavored **high quality** vodka in a clean screw or cork top bottle.
- Add an aromatic like saffron or cardamom or fennel or cloves or star anise, or a combination of them. If you chose to add nothing else, seal your bottle and put it away!
- If you chose to add more, you can add citrus zest – orange, lime, lemon, or grapefruit. These can be made at home very easily or can be purchased at most stores. Again, if you chose to add nothing else, seal your bottle and put it away!
- If you want a touch of sweetness - sweetness varies, some people like it really sweet, some people don't - add misri (rock sugar) or raisins or other dry fruit. Again, if you chose to add nothing else, seal your bottle and put it away!
- Some people also add nuts like cashews, almonds and pistachios.
- Finally, seal your bottle and put it away in a cool dark place.

Patience is key – give it a few months. Chill well before serving and use cold glasses. It's traditionally been a sipping beverage, much like brandy, so try it on its own before mixing it. Can the creation of infused liquor be credited to our Sindhi ancestors? It's unlikely that anyone has researched it, so no one really knows for sure – but like everything else, Sindhis do it better!



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