

Culinary Lavender:

Lavender-Spice Mulled Apple Cider



I LOVE THE COMBINATION OF SEASONINGS IN THIS SUPER-FRAGRANT AND FULL-BODIED APPLE CIDER. IT IS WORTH PURCHASING SOME LAVENDER BUDS AND A VANILLA BEAN, THOUGH YOU CAN SUB VANILLA EXTRACT FOR THE PIECE OF BEAN, IF NECESSARY. I CALL FOR WHOLE SPICES BECAUSE THEY TASTE FRESHER AND DON'T LEAVE RESIDUE IN THE CIDER, BUT YOU MUST, GROUND SPICES WILL CERTAINLY SUFFICE.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 quarts good-quality sweet (not hard) apple cider
- 2 to 3 teaspoons packed light or dark brown sugar, optional
- 4 or 5 nickel-size thin slices of peeled fresh ginger root (or substitute slices of crystallized ginger instead)
- 2 to 3 teaspoons dried culinary lavender buds
- 1 2- to 3-inch cinnamon stick, broken in half or thirds crosswise
- ½ -inch piece vanilla bean, coarse chopped or broken into pieces (or ½ teaspoon vanilla extract)
- 1 teaspoon whole allspice berries, slightly crushed
- ½ teaspoon green cardamom seeds (the small hard seeds removed from cardamom pods)
- 4 whole cloves, slightly crushed
- Small crab apples or orange slices for garnish
- Culinary lavender sprigs for garnish, optional

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a 4-quart or similar stainless steel, enameled or other non-reactive saucepan, stir together the cider, sugar, ginger root, lavender, cinnamon, vanilla, allspice, cardamom, and cloves.
2. Heat over medium-high heat just to a simmer, then adjust the heat so the mixture barely simmers, uncovered, for at least 30 minutes and up to 1 hour. If using immediately strain the cider through a very fine mesh sieve and serve, garnished with small crab apples or orange slices, and lavender sprigs if desired.
3. Alternatively, let cool, then refrigerate, covered, up to 3 days. Then strain out the spices using a fine mesh sieve. Reheat the mulled cider until piping hot but not boiling and serve. Makes about 6 1-cup servings, or 1½ quarts (due to the evaporation during simmering).

Tip: Yes, I know that cardamom is very pricey, but it imparts a truly enticing aroma in the recipe. Sometimes Indian grocery stores or ethnic spice shops sell it in bulk, so you can purchase a small amount. And note that any that's left over is superb in chai tea or chocolate.

Author: Nancy Baggett

Recipe type: cooking

Serves: (6) 1 cup servings

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<https://nancyslavenderplace.com/product/art-cooking-lavender/>