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**6**  
**FAVORITE**  
**DIY**  
**RECIPES**  
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**mix it up** DIY cream of coconut offers a summery taste of the tropics.

# Cuckoo for Coconut

Thirsty for the freshest Piña Colada around? Then ditch the canned stuff and blend up a batch of DIY cream of coconut. A key ingredient in tiki drinks, coconut adds a tropical touch to summery island cocktails, and when you want fresh-from-the-tropics taste, canned cream of coconut just won't cut it. Thankfully, with a fresh coconut, a few simple tools and some everyday kitchen gear, you can prepare a batch of homemade cream of coconut that will have you never looking back to cans again.

Story by Tracy Howard  
Photos by Stuart Mullenberg

## tips

To check the freshness of a coconut, shake it close to your ear. If you hear the coconut water sloshing around inside, it's good. If not, best move on to another.

Once you've extracted all the cream in step 4, steep the cheesecloth-bound coconut in 1 cup of hot water for 5 minutes. Squeeze out as much liquid as possible. Cover and refrigerate this coconut "milk" to use in everything from iced coffee to cooking coconut rice.

### Ingredients

- 1 whole fresh coconut (about 2 lbs.)
- ¼ cup water
- Pinch kosher salt
- ⅛ cup granulated sugar
- ⅛ cup maple syrup

### Tools

- Hammer
- Nail or corkscrew
- Paring knife
- Peeler
- Blender
- Cheesecloth
- Colander
- Large bowl
- Small saucepan
- Wooden spoon
- 2 small glass jars



1

Locate the three "eyes" at the top of the coconut. With a nail or corkscrew, carefully puncture a hole through the softest of the three eyes. Drain the liquid inside the coconut into a glass (you can strain this liquid and drink it alone over ice).



2

With a hammer, firmly but carefully hit around the coconut's equator (imagine the pierced eye as the North Pole). Continue to rotate the coconut to hit around its entire circumference. After several rounds it will split in two.



3

Place the coconut in the freezer for 15 minutes. This will help separate the flesh inside from the hard outer shell. With a paring knife, gently remove the white coconut flesh; discard the shell. Using a vegetable peeler, remove any remaining shell fragments from the coconut flesh.



## Fresh Coconut Piña Colada

2 oz. light rum  
2 oz. fresh pineapple juice  
3 Tbsp. homemade cream of coconut

Tools: blender  
Glass: Piña Colada  
Garnish: fresh pineapple wedge

Combine all ingredients and blend with ½ cup of ice. Pour into a chilled glass and garnish.



4

In a blender, pulse the coconut flesh with ¼ cup of water until it resembles a coarse pulp. Scoop the pulp into a cheesecloth-lined colander and strain into a large bowl. Gather the corners of the cheesecloth, and use your hands to wring the cheesecloth-wrapped coconut, extracting as much liquid as possible.



5

Pour the coconut liquid into a small saucepan and bring just to a boil. Stirring with a wooden spoon, reduce heat to medium-low and let simmer for 5 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the sugar and maple syrup.



6

Pour into a clean glass jar and let rest overnight at room temperature to allow the cream of coconut to separate from the coconut oil. Scoop off the cream and keep refrigerated for up to 1 week. Makes about 1 cup.

**mix it up** Brighten your winter cocktails with a batch of DIY grapefruit bitters.

# Good Medicine

Like a pinch of salt in cooking, bitters help harmonize and highlight the various flavors in a cocktail, and with winter citrus in peak season, now's the perfect time to add a batch of homemade grapefruit bitters to your shelf. As bar manager for Seattle's Essex (also featured on page 49), Gary Abts helps oversee the bar's kaleidoscopic range of housemade bitters, elixirs and liqueurs. His formula for grapefruit bitters layers the bright, seasonal citrus with a host of complementary herbs and spices. It's a delicious element in drinks calling for tequila or rum, or in Abts' Voyager Cocktail with gin, Campari and two aperitifs.

Story by Tracy Howard  
Photos by Stuart Mullenberg

## Voyager Cocktail

1½ oz. Voyager gin (or gin of your choice)  
¾ oz. Cocchi Americano  
½ oz. blanc-style vermouth (Abts uses Dolin)  
¼ oz. Campari  
2 drops grapefruit bitters

Tools: mixing glass, barspoon  
Glass: coupe  
Garnish: grapefruit twist

Combine all ingredients and stir with ice cubes.  
Strain into a chilled coupe and garnish.

*Gary Abts, Essex, Seattle*

### Ingredients

3 large grapefruits  
2 lemons  
2 Tbsp. coriander, whole  
3 Tbsp. minced fresh ginger  
1 Tbsp. dried gentian root  
1 Tbsp. dried mint  
1 Tbsp. dried wormwood  
1 Tbsp. whole clove  
1 Tbsp. dried dandelion root  
1 bottle high-proof, neutral grain spirit (Abts uses 151-proof vodka)

### Tools

Channel knife or peeler  
2 large glass jars with lids  
Cheesecloth  
Funnel  
Small measuring glass or coffee mug  
Coffee filters  
Glass bottles for storage



**1**

Peel the grapefruits and lemons with a channel knife or peeler.



**2**

In a large glass jar, combine citrus zest with remaining ingredients, cover and shake. Let sit in a cool, dark place for 3 weeks.



**3**

Funnel through a double layer of cheesecloth into a clean glass jar, and then gather the ends of the cheesecloth to enclose the solids.



**4**

In a measuring glass or coffee mug, steep the cheesecloth-enclosed solids in 8 oz. of hot water until cooled to room temperature.



**5**

Discard solids and add steeped water to the alcohol mixture. Let stand for 5 more days, or until completely settled.



**6**

Strain through another double layer of cheesecloth and then through coffee filters until no longer cloudy, then transfer to tincture bottles.

**mix it up** Homemade horchata is sublime for summertime.

# Rice Dream

Simple yet refreshing, a tall glass of horchata instantly cuts through the heat of a warm summer's day. But finding the perfect recipe was easier said than done for Joshua Kimball, chef at Por Qué No Taquería in Portland, Oregon. He traveled to Guadalajara three years ago only to get a taste of what he didn't want to serve. "Everywhere we went people were drinking powdered or premixed horchata," he says. "We wanted to get back to something more authentic." Traditional recipes call for everything from nuts to grains, but Kimball's combines the best of both worlds. Adapted from a recipe from Rick Bayless' *Authentic Mexican: Regional Cooking from the Heart of Mexico*, it combines blanched almonds with raw white rice to smooth and creamy results. Add a splash of dark rum to make an Horchata Borracha, which appropriately translates to "drunken horchata," a decidedly grown-up take on a sugar-spiced classic.

Story by Tracy Howard  
Photos by Stuart Mullenberg

## Ingredients

½ cup uncooked, long-grain white rice  
1 ½ cups blanched, slivered almonds (see tips)  
1 cinnamon stick, preferably canela (see tips)  
5 cups hot water (divided)  
¾ cup granulated sugar  
3 cups cold water

## Tools

Spice grinder  
Food processor  
Blender  
Large mixing bowl  
Clean kitchen towel  
Strainer  
Cheesecloth  
Wooden spoon  
Large pitcher



**1**

Pulverize rice in a spice grinder until powdery.



**2**

Blend almonds and powdered rice in a food processor until the mixture resembles coarse meal.



**3**

Transfer almond-rice mix to a large bowl and add cinnamon stick. Stir in three cups of hot water, cover with a clean towel and refrigerate for 10 hours.

## Horchata Borracha

1 ½ oz. dark rum  
4 oz. horchata  
Ice cubes

Tools: shaker, strainer  
Glass: Collins, highball or pint  
Garnish: freshly ground cinnamon

Combine all ingredients and shake.  
Strain into an ice-filled glass and garnish.

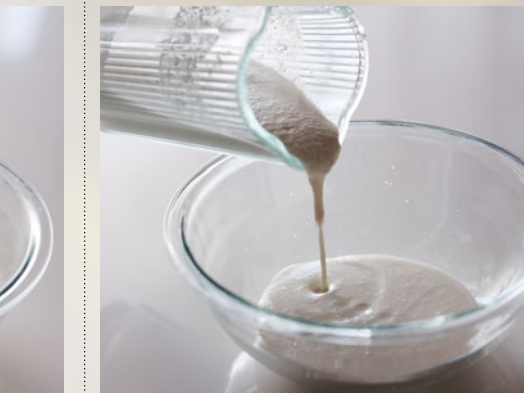




## tips >>

*Canela*, or Mexican cinnamon, is a softer, loose-bark cinnamon grown in Sri Lanka that's common in Mexican cooking. You can find it at gourmet grocers and Mexican markets. Common cinnamon sticks, or cassia, may be substituted for a more woody, subtle flavor.

Blanched, slivered almonds are available in the bulk grocery section of most natural-food markets. If you only have raw almonds on hand, blanch them first by covering with boiling water for one minute. Drain and rinse under cold water. Slip off the skins and coarsely chop prior to step 1.



### 4

Working in batches, purée the mixture on high speed in a blender for five minutes, pouring the puréed mixture into a new bowl.



### 5

Add the sugar and two cups of hot water to the mixture in the bowl. Working in batches, purée in a blender for three minutes on high speed.



### 6

Strain each blended batch through a cheesecloth-lined strainer and into a clean pitcher. Stir in three cups of cold water and refrigerate for up to three days. Serve over ice. Makes about 8 cups.

**mix it up** A pickled cocktail garnish that preserves a flavor familiar to the South.

# Holy Okra!

Pickling has long been part of the South's culinary traditions, and perhaps no pickled vegetable is more thoroughly southern than okra, which grows with abandon throughout the region. "Eating okra is like breathing," says Atlanta-based chef and cookbook author, Virginia Willis. "It's just one of those traditional southern ingredients that you'll find in almost every backyard garden." Tangy, crunchy pickled okra adds a dose of regional flavor to a Bloody Mary, and this recipe, adapted from Willis' *Bon Appetite, Y'all: Recipes and Stories from Three Generations of Southern Cooking*, balances the garden-fresh veggie with a potent pinch of mustard seeds, garlic cloves and chile peppers.

Story by Tracy Howard  
Photos by Stuart Mullenberg

## Cajun Bloody Mary

1 ½ oz. vodka  
4 oz. Cochon Bloody Mix  
3 dashes red Tabasco  
½ lemon, cut into wedges  
Ice cubes  
Tools: shaker, muddler  
Glass: salt-rimmed highball  
Garnish: pickled okra

In the bottom of a shaker, muddle the lemon wedges. Add vodka, Mary mix, hot sauce and ice cubes. Shake vigorously and pour, unstrained, into a salt-rimmed highball. Garnish.

### COCHON BLOODY MIX

1 46-oz. can or bottle  
V-8 Original vegetable juice  
2 Tbsp. finely ground black pepper  
2 Tbsp. whole-grain mustard  
1 Tbsp. garlic powder  
1 ½ oz. pork broth  
1 ½ oz. fresh lime juice  
2 ½ oz. fresh lemon juice  
3 ½ oz. red Tabasco  
2 oz. green Tabasco  
½ oz. red wine vinegar  
1 oz. olive brine  
½ oz. pickled okra juice

Combine all ingredients and stir well before using. Will keep refrigerated for up to one week.

Makes about 1/2 gallon.

*Cochon, New Orleans*

### Ingredients

2 lbs. medium okra pods  
4 small dried red chiles, like Thai bird chiles, whole  
2 tsp. yellow mustard seed  
1 tsp. whole black peppercorns  
8 cloves garlic, peeled  
4 cups distilled white vinegar  
2 cups water  
2 Tbsp. pickling salt

### Tools

Measuring spoons  
4 sterilized pint-sized canning jars with two-piece lids  
Medium saucepan  
Large wooden spoon  
Home-canning kit including stovetop water-bath canner with cover, rack, and rubber-tipped tongs

Makes 4 pints.



1

Wash the okra and trim the stems to ½ inch.



2

Place 1 chile, ½ tsp. mustard seed, ¼ tsp. peppercorns and 2 cloves of garlic in the bottom of each of 4 sterilized pint-sized canning jars.



3

Divide the okra evenly among the jars, placing the pods vertically and alternating the stems up and down. Pack them tightly so they won't float when you add the liquid.





**tip** >>>

If fresh okra is unavailable in your area, you can order it year-round from specialty produce sites, such as [Melissas.com](http://Melissas.com). And if you can't find Thai bird chiles, Mexican chiles de árbol work just as well.



**4**

In a medium saucepan over medium heat, bring the vinegar, water and salt to a boil. Stir to dissolve the salt.



**5**

Pour the boiling mixture over the packed okra, leaving  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch of space between the liquid and the top of the jar. Wipe the jar rims. Set the lid on the rim of the jar and screw on the ring. Keep refrigerated for up to 1 month. Alternatively, process the jars in a boiling-water canner for 15 minutes (steps 6 and 7).



**6**

Place the jars in the rack in the stovetop water-bath canner; add enough water so the jars are covered by at least 1 inch of water. Bring the water to a boil over high heat. Continue boiling, covered, for 15 minutes. Start timing only after the water is boiling.



**7**

After processing, turn off the heat and remove the lid from off the canner. Using the tongs, remove the jars and place them on a towel to cool. When the jars seal properly, the lid will be slightly concave once cool. If the jars haven't sealed properly, refrigerate and use within 1 month. Store unopened, processed jars at room temperature up to 1 year.

**mix it up** A 19<sup>th</sup>-century root beer recipe yields a remarkably timeless taste.

# Rooted in Tradition

Perhaps no other beverage evokes childhood memories of summer more than root beer. An old-fashioned pop with a timeless taste, the sassafras-flavored frother was first popularized in 1876 when Charles Hires introduced his concentrated mix of more than two dozen roots, botanicals and spices at the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition, and it's been a crowd-quenching favorite ever since. This version from Todd Leonard, owner of the Rusty Jug BBQ & Root Beer Saloon in El Dorado Springs, Missouri, harkens back to Hires' day. Adapted from a 19<sup>th</sup>-century formula Leonard stumbled across in the 1990s, the recipe combines traditional sassafras and burdock roots with earthy molasses, refreshing peppermint and hints of ginger spice for a brightly flavored soda-pop concentrate sure to make summertime memories all its own.

Story by Tracy Howard  
Photos by Stuart Mullenberg

## tips >>

This concentrated root beer syrup makes a killer float—simply drizzle over vanilla (or chocolate, or rocky road) ice cream and add as much soda water as you like.

Feel free to use either dark or light molasses in this recipe—just avoid blackstrap, as that may overpower the other spices.

### Ingredients

8 cups water  
4 oz. sassafras root, cut to ½ inch or smaller  
2 oz. burdock root, cut to ½ inch or smaller  
1 oz. fresh chopped ginger  
1 oz. dandelion root  
2 oz. juniper berries  
2 cloves  
1 star anise  
2 tsp. coriander seeds  
1 cup clover honey  
½ cup molasses  
2 drops peppermint extract  
6 cups of pure cane sugar

### Tools

2 large stockpots  
Cheesecloth  
Funnel  
Glass jar



1

In a large stockpot, combine water and all ingredients except honey, molasses, peppermint extract and sugar. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to medium-low and let simmer for 30 minutes.



2

Remove from heat, and once the liquid has cooled to room temperature, strain it through a double layer of cheesecloth into another large stockpot.



**3**

Add honey, molasses, peppermint extract and sugar and let simmer for 5 minutes. Remove from heat and let cool to room temperature.



**4**

Funnel into a clean, glass jar and refrigerate overnight before using.



**5**

To serve, combine 1 oz. of root beer concentrate with 6 oz. of soda water in an ice-filled glass, then stir.

**mix it up** Homemade vin d'orange is the gift that keeps on giving.

# Orange Alert

Do like the French do this holiday season and give the gift of *vin d'orange*. A Lillet-like aperitif popular in the south of France, vin d'orange highlights the Seville orange, which was once thought to be inedible because of its extreme bitterness. Yet it's that bitter quality that adds subtle quinine-like notes to this citrusy mix of vodka, vanilla and white wine. This easy recipe from David Lebovitz's new book, *Ready for Dessert* (Ten Speed Press, 2010) is a great way to treat your friends a family to something they'll enjoy sipping just as much as you'll enjoy making it.

Story by Tracy Howard

Photos by Stuart Mullenberg

## tips

Although popular opinion calls for using a wine that's good enough to drink on its own, "in France, you would use the cheapest white wine, since it's getting mixed with oranges and sugar," says Lebovitz, "I buy boxed white wine, and it works great."

When picking out oranges, shop for ones that are heavy for their size since heavier citrus tends to yield more juice and is less likely to be dried out. Also, if you can't find Seville oranges at your local grocer, order them online from a specialty produce site like [melissas.com](http://melissas.com)

### Ingredients

¾ cup granulated sugar  
5 cups white wine  
1 cup vodka  
3 Seville or bitter oranges  
1 lemon  
½ vanilla bean, split lengthwise

### Tools

Large glass jar with lid  
Wooden spoon  
Paring knife  
Mesh strainer  
Cheesecloth  
Funnel  
Clean glass bottles with lids or corks

Makes approximately six cups and will keep refrigerated for up to one year.



1

In a large glass jar, combine the sugar, white wine and vodka and stir until the sugar mostly dissolves.



2

Slice the oranges and lemon into quarters and add them to the jar.

web extra 

Can't find bitter oranges? Head to [imbibemagazine.com/ND10](http://imbibemagazine.com/ND10) for a variation using regular navels.



3

Scrape the seeds from the vanilla bean and add them to the jar, then drop in the pod.



4

Cover jar, and let mixture stand undisturbed for 1 month in a cool, dark place. The vin d'orange will take on a slightly hazy, pale orange hue. After a month, remove and discard the fruit and vanilla bean.



5

Pour the mixture through a mesh strainer lined with a double layer of cheesecloth or a coffee filter, then funnel it back into clean bottles. Seal tightly with a cork and refrigerate.