



HOW TO PREPARE YAO JIU MEDICINAL WINE

Comment: Our invoice will provide instructions on dosage and specific processing directions that pertain to your order; please refer to these instructions prior to preparing the formula. What follows are step-by-step instructions on how to prepare a jiu, but before you get started; we believe it's a good idea to read over the answers to a few typical questions on how to make medicinal wine.

What is a medicinal wine?

The ancient practice of aging herbs in alcohol is the simplest and, by some accounts, the oldest method known for making traditional Chinese medicinal preparations. The Chinese word *Yao* refers to medicinal and *Jiu* refers to any type of alcoholic beverage. It can refer to wine, sherry, brandy, or distilled liquor such as vodka.

In ancient times medicine wine was made by adding raw herbs directly to fermenting rice wine which produced a crude form of herbal wine (called a *bai jiu*). In modern times, medicinal wines are aged (or soaked) in a prepared grain alcohol solution for several months to a year allowing the medicinal properties to be extracted making an herbal wine.

What's the difference between a jiu (medicinal wine) and a jow (liniment)?

These are two different things, one is used internally and the other externally. While both age or soak herbs to draw out their medicinal properties; the jiu is a tonic that is consumed, while the jow is a liniment or ointment that is used externally for hand conditioning, iron palm training, sprains, pulled muscles, etc.

How does the aging process work?

Once the herbs begin to soak or age in the alcohol solution the medicinal properties are extracted or drawn out by the alcohol. The spirit itself is considered to possess nourishing, blood invigorating properties that enhance the therapeutic effects of the herbs prepared with it.

How can I improve on the taste?

The flavor of the jiu can be enhanced by using a sweet rice wine, fine brandy, or a French cognac which is favored among Chinese connoisseurs. If you plan to use vodka, after the herbs have been discarded add simple-syrup, honey or rock sugar as a sweetener and the final results will be more like a liqueur.

Where should I age the jiu?

The most important consideration after the quality of the ingredients (herbs and alcohol) is the environmental conditions during the aging process. Ideal conditions are those that most closely mimic the dark, cool, dry conditions found in commercial wine cellars. If you aren't lucky enough to have one, then try the basement, the back of the closet, or any place that is cool, dark, moisture free, and void of any sunlight.

Do I just leave it alone while it ages?

During the first month (the beginning stage of aging) the vessel should be turned 2-3 times a week, but once a week thereafter.

What materials are needed?

- A porcelain or glass container, with a tight lid
- The raw herb ingredients
- Alcohol
- Sweetener (optional)

What kind of container should I use?

A large glass bottle will work, one that will hold at least a 3-4 liter or more, in most cases we prefer to use one that holds a gallon. We prefer to use larger containers to accommodate those formulas that require more alcohol and herbs. Be sure it has a cap, cork, or tight lid.

How much wine do I add?

Normally the ratio used to prepare a jiu is approx. 1.5 to 2.5 ounces of fresh herbs to one 5th or liter of alcohol. Refer to the herbal formulas' processing instructions on our invoice which provides specific instructions on the exact amount of herbs and alcohol required.

How long does it take to age?

Although a minimum of 90 days is recommended, keep in mind, that the longer the tonic ages the more potent it becomes (by that we mean its effects will be stronger if it ages longer).

It is not unheard of for a jiu to be aged for as long as one year. In fact, traditionally during the Chinese New Year's celebration it is common for wishes for long-life and good health to be followed by a toast from a medicinal tonic jiu whose aging began on the New Year's Eve of the previous year.

How much do I drink?

A normal daily dose ranges from one tablespoon to one Chinese teacup (the equivalent of a shot glass), which can be taken full strength or diluted with 2-4 parts of water.

STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS

1. Uncap the bottle to be used
2. Add the herbs
3. Pour in the alcohol (and sweetener if you require that)
4. Recap the bottle
5. Store the bottle in a cool, dry, dark place for a minimum of 90 days
6. Turn the bottle 2-3 times weekly for 30 days, then once weekly thereafter

When the aging process is complete do not discard the herbs from the bottle, they should remain in the bottle until all of the wine has been consumed.

Note: If you have forgotten about a jiu that you have made, which has allowed the medicinal wine to age for longer than one or two years, do not discard it! That is one potent jiu, and the results will be quite good. In ancient China they were known to age their medicine wines for many years until the herbs had all turned to silt in the bottom of the container.



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