

Coffee and Champagne, Because We Can



Say you're having a great Sunday morning brunch—you have your cup of coffee, you have your champagne, it's all very nice. But why waste time? Why not combine the two? Crazy as it sounds, something magical happens when you combine the jolt of bitter coffee with the bubbles and effervescence of champagne. I start with cold-brew coffee. I'm not a coffee snob, I drink coffee however it's served to me, but I love the rich flavor of cold brew. The difference in taste between that and drip coffee makes you appreciate how you can get such different results with one ingredient. I shake the coffee with lemon and ice, and a dash of brandy, then add a big pour of champagne—two of my favorite Sunday

morning beverages combined into one eye-opening whole. (If you're like me, you'll be serving this to a crowd, but this recipe scales up easily.)

MAKES 1 DRINK

COLD BREW

1¼ cups ground coffee, medium grind

4 cups cold water

3 sprigs lemon verbena

½ ounce fresh lemon juice

1 ounce brandy

½ ounce agave nectar

1½ ounces Spanish cava, champagne, or other dry sparkling wine

FOR THE COLD BREW

Combine the coffee and water in an airtight container and refrigerate for 24 hours.

Line a sieve with a coffee filter. Strain the brew into another container and refrigerate. This will keep in the fridge for at least 3 days.

Put 2 of the lemon verbena sprigs in the bottom of a cocktail shaker and muddle them with the lemon juice. Add 1 ounce of the cold-brewed coffee, the brandy, and agave nectar and shake briefly but vigorously with ice.

Strain into a Collins glass filled with ice. Add the cava. To garnish, lightly crush the remaining sprig of lemon verbena between your fingertips to release its aroma and put it on top of the drink.

STRAIGHT TALK

I'm not entirely sure what qualifies this as a fruit or vegetable recipe. José would argue the grapes in the champagne, the coffee "cherries" in the cold brew, maybe the spritz of lemon. I also can't tell you whether it's the novelty of the combination, or the enthusiasm with which José pressed the piece of paper with the recipe into my palm, but I think it's pretty genius. — MG