

Recipe: Floral nectar 🍯 vegan honey alternative

I recently purchased a vegan honey alternative at the supermarket out of curiosity. It was the same colour and consistency as honey, and very tasty, but more fruity than floral, being made from apple and lemon syrup (with a few extra ingredients). Not remarkably honey-like in flavour.

I think my approach here produces a flavour closer to the real thing. And it makes sense: this floral nectar is based on an infusion of dried flowers. The same kinds of flowers bees collect nectar from.

It's very simple to prepare. It takes 1 hour and 50 minutes to slowly reduce the nectar to a thick consistency. It is of course possible to reduce it quicker, at a higher heat, but this will yield a more cotton-candy/caramel flavour. By reducing it slowly we retain more of the floral notes of the infusion.

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp dried chamomile
- 1 tbsp dried flower mix*
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 2 slices of the lemon's peel
each about the size of your thumb
- 2 cups boiling water
- 2 cups of granulated white sugar

Instructions

1. In a teapot, infuse the chamomile and other dried flowers with the 2 cups of boiling water for 5 mins.
2. Pour the infusion (minus the flowers) into a small-medium sized saucepot. Add the sugar, lemon juice and the 2 slices of lemon peel. Bring to a boil, stirring occasionally.
3. Once it's bubbling, reduce to a medium heat, so that the liquid is barely just simmering. The liquid will get more active and bubbly the thicker the nectar gets. Take note of the time.
4. After 1 hour and 50 minutes, remove the pot from the heat and allow to cool. It will thicken as it cools.
5. Pour the cooled nectar into a clean jar (or two, depending on their size) and store in the fridge.

Tips 💡

- *I used 1 tbsp chamomile and 1 tbsp dried flower mix. This mixture was sold as a tea/infusion. It contains dried lavender, cornflower, marigold, rose, lemongrass.

If you can't find a mix exactly like this, you can try purchasing the dried flowers separately. Or try a pure chamomile nectar: it will be tasty too, just less complex in flavour.

- The nectar will thicken more as it cools. If you have under- or over-heated the nectar it may turn out too thin or too thick after cooling. If it's too thin, simmer a little longer. If it's too thick, stir in a little water while still warm.
- You can test the final thickness even before it has fully cooled by dripping a drop of the nectar onto a cold spoon and blowing on it until it's cooled off.
- Keep an eye on the pot: if it boils over you'll have a sticky mess and risk burning yourself badly. However, as long as you work with a medium heat and don't take your eye off the ball you should be safe.