

Classic Mulled Wine

Makes about 5 servings

2 small oranges or 1 large
1 bottle of affordable Merlot, Zinfandel
or Garnacha (also called Grenache)
¼ cup brandy
1 to 2 tablespoons maple syrup or
honey, to taste
2 whole cinnamon sticks
3 star anise
4 whole cloves
Optional garnishes: Fresh whole
cranberries (about ¼ cup), cinnamon
sticks, additional orange rounds or half
moons



Prepare oranges: If using 2 small, slice one into rounds and the other in half. If using 1 large orange, slice it in half through the round middle, then slice one of the halves into rounds. Place the rounds in a medium heavy-bottomed pot or small Dutch oven. Squeeze juice from orange halves into pot.

Pour wine into pot, followed by brandy. Add 1 tablespoon of the sweetener for now. Add cinnamon sticks, star anise and cloves.

Warm mixture over medium heat until steaming (about 5 minutes), and keep an eye on it. When you start seeing the tiniest of bubbles at the surface, reduce heat to the very lowest.

Carefully taste, and add another tablespoon of sweetener if isn't sweet enough for your liking. If it's not spicy enough, continue cooking over very low heat for 5 to 10 more minutes. Serve in mugs with your desired garnishes.

Notes: If you expect to polish off the mulled wine within 20 minutes or so, you can keep it on the stove over extra-low heat (it will become spicier with time). Otherwise, remove it from the heat, cover and rewarm over low heat if necessary. Leftovers will keep in the refrigerator for a couple of days; pour first through a strainer if you don't want it to become any spicier than it already is.

Source: Cookieandkate.com