

Absinthe Tasting and Cocktail Workshop

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What is Absinthe?

Absinthe is a strongly alcoholic aperitif made from alcohol and distilled herbs or herbal extracts, chief amongst them grand wormwood (*Artemisia absinthium*) and green anise, but also almost always including 3 other herbs: petite wormwood (*Artemisia pontica*, aka Roman wormwood), fennel, and hyssop. Some regionally authentic recipes also call for additional herbs like star anise (badiane), sweet flag (aka calamus), melissa (aka lemonbalm or citronnelle), angelica (both root and seed), dittany (a type of oregano grown in Crete), coriander, veronica (aka speedwell), marjoram or peppermint. [Source: www.oxygenee.com / Oxygenee Ltd.]

Timeline

Origins of absinthe trace back to the medical use of wormwood in Egypt as early as 1500bc.

1792	Absinthe begins as an all-purpose patent remedy created by Dr. Pierre Ordinaire, a French doctor living in Switzerland.
1797	First absinthe distillery in Couvet Switzerland.
1850s	Absinthe is the most popular aperitif in France where the hours from 5m to 7pm are known as "l'heure verte" the green hour.
1863	Phylloxera introduced to Europe and the vineyards are decimated. Wine production almost completely ceases by 1880.
1888	T. V. Munson awarded the Chevaliers du Merite Agricole in the Legion of Honor by French government for his work in restoring the French vineyards.
Late 1890s	Wine production in France reaches pre-Phylloxera levels.
1905	Jean Lanfray, an alcoholic in Switzerland, murders his two daughters and his pregnant wife in what was called the "Absinthe Murder."
1912	Absinthe banned in the US after a campaign led by the temperance movement.
1915	Absinthe banned in France after a campaign led by the wine industry.
1965	The creation of the Food and Drug Administration rewrites the US law banning absinthe. Any beverage must be thujone-free at less than 10ppm.
1990s	Equipment capable of measuring thujone levels less than 10ppm becomes available.
2007	First Absinthe approved for sale in the US by the TTB.

Production

- **Distilled Absinthe** is produced by macerating botanicals in a highly distilled spirit and then redistilling one or more times. Additionally, the spirit vapors may also pass through botanicals before condensation.
- **Compounded Absinthe** mixes flavoring essences and colorings with neutral alcohol. The infusion is then filtered and bottled.

Glossary

Absinthe	a French word that refers to the beverage or to the wormwood plant. In the US, there is no legal definition for absinthe.
la Fee Verte	French. Green Fairy.
liqueur	Same as cordial. A flavored and sweetened alcoholic beverage. Absinthe is a spirit, not a liqueur.
louche	The cloudy effect achieved by adding water to Absinthe. Compounds that dissolve in alcohol, but not water, are released. French for troubled or turbulent.
pastis	Absinthe as reformulated after the French ban. An anise and licorice flavored spirit, usually used as an aperitif.
thujone	One of the active compounds of <i>Artemisia absinthium</i> . Long incorrectly thought to be a hallucinogenic.
TTB	US Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, the agency that regulates labeling in the wine/spirits trade.

Absinthe Technique

Absinthe Drip

- 1.5 ounces Absinthe
- sugar cube (optional)
- Absinthe spoon, slotted spoon or strainer
- small pitcher of ice water

Pour Absinthe into a chilled rocks glass (no ice). Place the spoon or strainer on top of the glass. Slowly pour ice water over the sugar cube until it dissolves or the drink's volume is tripled.

Absinthe Plain

- 1.5 ounces Absinthe
- sugar cube or 1 teaspoon simple syrup (adjust to taste)
- tea strainer filled with chipped ice
- 2 chilled rocks glasses

Pour Absinthe and simple syrup into one of the rocks glasses. Place strainer over the other glass and slowly pour the Absinthe into the other glass. Repeat until ice is gone or the drink's volume is tripled.

Absinthe Frappe

- 1.5 ounces Absinthe
- 1 teaspoon simple syrup (adjust to taste)
- 1 dash anisette (optional)
- Chilled soda water

Shake all but soda with ice. Pour into a glass filled with ice. Top with soda.

Cocktail Recipes

Absinthe Curacao

- 2 ounces Absinthe
- 1 ounce orange curacao
- .25 ounces orange juice
- 2 teaspoon lemon juice

Shake with ice. Strain into chilled cocktail glass, orange peel garnish.

Death in the Afternoon

- 6 ounces cava or Champagne
- 1 ounce Absinthe

Pour Absinthe into a chilled flute. Top with cava or Champagne.

Hemingway's Kir

- 5 ounces cava or Champagne
- 1.5 ounces creme de cassis
- .5 ounces Absinthe

Combine cassis and Absinthe in the bottom of a chilled flute. Drop in a sugar cube (optional). Fill flute with cava or Champagne.

London Fog

- 1.5 ounces gin
- .25 ounces Absinthe

Combine, pour over shaved ice in a coupe or rocks glass. Top with soda (optional).

Monkey Gland

- 2 ounces gin
- 1 ounce orange juice
- 1 teaspoon grenadine
- 2 dashes Absinthe

Shake with ice. Strain into chilled cocktail glass, orange peel garnish.

Root of All Evil

- 3 ounces root beer
- .5 ounces Absinthe

Build in a mixing glass. Pour over chipped ice in a rocks glass.

Chrysanthemum

- 2 ounces dry vermouth
- 1 ounce Benedictine
- .5 ounces Absinthe

Stir with ice. Strain into chilled cocktail glass, orange peel garnish.

Dixie

- 1 ounce gin
- 1 ounce orange juice
- .5 ounces Absinthe
- .5 ounces dry vermouth

Shake with ice. Strain into chilled cocktail glass, orange peel garnish.

Duchess

- 1 ounce Absinthe
- 1 ounce dry vermouth
- 1 ounce sweet vermouth

Stir with ice. Strain into chilled cocktail glass.

La Louisiane

- 1 ounce rye whiskey
- 1 ounce Benedictine
- 1 ounce sweet vermouth
- 5 dashes Absinthe
- 5 dashes Peychaud's bitters

Stir with ice. Strain into chilled cocktail glass with a cherry garnish.

Vintner's Nightcap

- 3 ounces shiraz or cabernet sauvignon
- 1 ounce Kahlua
- .25 ounces Cherry Heering
- 2 dashes Absinthe

Build in a snifter or wine glass (no ice). Float a star anise as a garnish.

Absinthe Minded Martini

- dry vermouth
- 3 ounces gin
- .5 ounces Absinthe
- .5 ounces Grand Marnier

Coat a chilled cocktail glass with vermouth and empty. Stir gin and absinthe in a mixing glass. Strain into the chilled cocktail glass. Float Grand Marnier. Garnish with a flamed orange peel.

Obituary Cocktail

- 2 ounces gin
- .25 ounces dry vermouth
- .25 ounces Absinthe

Stir with ice. Strain into chilled cocktail glass.

Sazerac

- Absinthe
- 3 ounces rye whiskey
- .5 ounces simple syrup
- dash Peychaud's bitters

Stir with ice. Strain into a glass rinsed with Absinthe. Garnish with a lemon twist.

TNT Cocktail

- 1 ounce Absinthe
- 1 ounce Cognac
- .5 ounces Cointreau
- dash of bitters

Stir with ice. Strain into chilled cocktail glass.