

Cherries in Eau de Vie

During the summer, when cherries are plump, ripe, and juicy, I put up a few jars of cherries in alcohol and keep them in the cellar to enjoy during the winter. My mother always had some preserved sour cherries or Montmorency cherries on hand. Served with some of the cherries, this eau de vie makes a great after-dinner drink. I sometimes use pure grain or fruit alcohol (about 190-proof) that I dilute by half with distilled water, but if this is not an option for you, substitute vodka instead.

Trim the stems of about 1 pound large sweet cherries such as Bing, leaving about 1/2 inch of stem attached to the cherries. (If the stems are pulled out, the alcohol will permeate the cherries, making them soft and mushy instead of firm and crunchy.) In a bowl, mix about 1/2 cup light corn syrup and 1 1/2 cups eau de vie or vodka. Pack the cherries into a Mason jar and pour the alcohol mixture over them, adding enough so it just covers the fruit. Cover the jar with a tight-fitting lid and set aside in a cool place, such as a cellar, for at least a month. Serve a few cherries in a brandy glass with some of the liquid. The cherries will keep for a couple of years.