

DARK AND STORMY

This recipe calls for a dark rum with a molasses-forward taste. Gosling's Black Seal rum is the traditional choice for this classic cocktail, and Myers's dark rum will work, but Cruzan Black Strap rum is my preference. I like to use soda water along with my own ginger syrup in place of the usual ginger beer for a nice boost in both fresh ginger flavor and effervescence, and my Pumpkin Spice Bitters add a splash of color and spicy depth of flavor to finish the drink.

MAKES 1 cocktail

2 ounces dark rum
1 ounce Homemade Ginger Syrup (page 234)
¾ ounce fresh lime juice
2 ounces soda water
2 dashes (about ½ teaspoon) of Pumpkin Spice Bitters (page 233; optional)
1 mint sprig, for garnish (optional)

Combine the rum, ginger syrup, and lime juice in a cocktail shaker, fill with ice, cover, and shake until cold (about 10 seconds of vigorous shaking). Strain into a Tom Collins glass filled with ice, then top with the soda water followed by the bitters, if using. Slap the mint sprig (if using) against the palm of your hand to release the aroma and then slide the stem into the drink, leaving the leaves sticking out.

PUMPKIN SPICE BITTERS

Use this seasonally inspired infusion in place of Angostura bitters in classic cocktails (like the Dark and Stormy, page 240) or to boost your baked goods (like the Parsnip Cake, page 211). The chile is a quirky addition, but I think it's a great asset for flavor and color.

MAKES ½ cup | SOUS VIDE COOKING TIME: 1 hour (or up to 2 hours) | ACTIVE PREP TIME: 10 minutes, plus 30 minutes to cool

3-inch piece fresh ginger, thinly sliced
2 cinnamon sticks
1 guajillo or ancho chile, stemmed, seeded, and cut into ½-inch-wide strips
1 teaspoon whole allspice berries (about 20)
½ teaspoon whole cloves (about 12)
1 whole nutmeg, crushed with the flat of a heavy knife or the bottom of a pot
½ vanilla pod, split lengthwise and seeds scraped (optional)
1 tablespoon honey
½ cup bourbon or other whiskey

Preheat your sous vide water bath to 60°C (140°F).

Place all of the ingredients in a quart-size freezer-safe ziplock bag and seal using the water displacement or table-edge method (see page 12). I recommend the latter method for recipes with a relatively large amount of liquid.

When the water reaches the target temperature, lower the bag into the water bath and cook for 1 hour.

Remove the bag from the water bath and place on the countertop. Let cool to room temperature, about 30 minutes.

Strain the liquid through a fine-mesh sieve into a small bottle or jar to remove the spices (a bitters bottle with an eyedropper is great for this; the bottles can be purchased online). Cap tightly and store at room temperature out of direct sunlight for up to 6 months.

HOMEMADE GINGER SYRUP

Ginger syrup has become an essential tool in the mixologist's arsenal, and this recipe can hang with the best of them: biting and spicy and with an intense ginger flavor. Sous vide improves the results by allowing the syrup to cook without evaporation, which lets you maintain the ratio of liquid to sugar (important for making consistent syrups) and prevents the loss of aromatics into the air, producing a more pronounced flavor. If you're a ginger lover like me, substitute this anywhere you might use honey or simple syrup.

MAKES 1½ cups | **SOUS VIDE COOKING TIME:** 30 minutes (or up to 1 hour) | **ACTIVE PREP TIME:** 5 minutes, plus at least 10 minutes to cool

4 ounces fresh ginger (about four 3-inch pieces), sliced 1⁄8 inch thick (about 1 cup)

1 cup coarse sugar (such as turbinado or Demerara), or ½ cup each granulated sugar and lightly packed light brown sugar

1 cup water

Preheat your sous vide water bath to 85°C (185°F).

Place all of the ingredients in a gallon-size freezer-safe ziplock bag and seal using the water displacement or table-edge method (see page 12). I recommend the latter method for recipes with a relatively large amount of liquid.

When the water reaches the target temperature, lower the bag into the water bath and cook for 30 minutes.

Remove the bag from the water bath and chill in an ice water bath (see page 15) for 10 minutes, in the freezer for 30 minutes, or in the refrigerator for 1 hour.

Pour the liquid and ginger pieces into a blender and process until a smooth puree forms. Strain through a fine-mesh sieve into a bottle or mason jar, pressing against the solids with the back of a spoon or ladle to extract as much liquid from the pulp as possible. The syrup can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks or in the freezer for up to 2 months.

