



## Vanilla Vixen

*When life hands you vanilla, make a cocktail! Always open to exploring new gastronomical indulgences, we were immensely rewarded with building the flavor profile of this cocktail. Light and refreshing with a generous essence of vanilla, guests will certainly savor this tempting libation. The vanilla syrup and sugar should be made well in advance to allow the vanilla flavors to intensify as it rests.*

*The cocktail recipe makes 1 drink, but the syrup and the sugar yield enough for multiple drinks*

## Ingredients

*For the vanilla syrup:*

2 cups water  
2 cups sugar  
1 vanilla bean, split in half and seeds scraped

*For the vanilla sugar, (optional garnish):*

2 cups sugar  
1 vanilla bean, used and reserved vanilla bean from the syrup

*For the cocktail:*

1½ oz vanilla syrup  
2 oz vodka  
splash of lime juice  
1 oz sparkling water (or club soda)  
Vanilla Bean (fresh or dried), optional for garnish

## Equipment

Martini glasses  
Martini shaker  
Airtight jar or container

## Preparation

*Prepare the vanilla syrup:*

Combine the water, sugar and vanilla bean in a medium pot and bring the mixture to a simmer, dissolving the sugar. Turn off the heat, cover and let the mixture steep for 1 hour. Remove the vanilla bean (there is no need to strain because the seeds will pass through a sieve, and they add a lovely speckled appearance to the cocktail). Reserve the vanilla pod for use in the sugar. Cool the syrup to room temperature and set aside until ready to serve. This will keep refrigerated for 1 month.

*Prepare the vanilla sugar:*

Place 1 cup of the sugar in a large container with an airtight lid. Cut each half of the vanilla bean in half again, this time width-wise, and add the pieces to the sugar. Cover with the remaining 1 cup of sugar and seal the lid tightly. Place in a cool area and shake the container several times per day to distribute the vanilla essence. Continue this process for at least 1 week, and up to 1 month.

*[Chef's Note: This is for a quick and smaller version of vanilla sugar, but to make more (it keeps for 2-3 months), increase the sugar to up to 4 cups and keep the vanilla bean in for even longer, up to 1 month. Make sure to complete this step way in advance, as it needs time for the flavor to build. If you are pressed on time, you can always add the vanilla bean and blend in a food processor with the sugar. This will distribute the vanilla, but the flavor will not be as intense as letting it infuse the sugar.]*

August 2006

*Prepare the cocktail:*

Pour some of the vanilla sugar onto a small plate that is wide enough to fit the rim of the martini glass. Lightly wet the rim of the glass with water, then dip into the sugar plate, making sure to coat the entire rim with sugar.

Pour all ingredients except the vanilla bean into a cocktail shaker about ½ full of ice. Shake vigorously for about 30 seconds. Strain into the sugared martini glass and garnish with a dried vanilla bean.

**Variations**

The vanilla syrup is also a delicious complement to many other drinks, such as a glass of Champagne or sparkling wine, a vanilla Mojito or even a non-alcoholic iced tea. For the vanilla Champagne, pour 1 ounce of the syrup into the bottom of a fluted glass and fill with your sparkler of choice.

*[Chef's Note: For a guilt-free alternative to the sugar in this recipe, feel free to substitute with Sweet Simplicity Sweetener, a zero-calorie all natural sweetener that can be substituted 1:1 for sugar. You can get a free sample of Sweet Simplicity [here](#).]*

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