

MONTGOMERY'S INN
RECIPE FROM THE HISTORIC KITCHEN

FOR SPRING DRINK

ORIGINAL RECEIPT

The Canadian Housewife's Manual of Cookery Carefully Compiled from the Best English, French and American Works, Especially Adapted to This Country, Hamilton, C.W.: Printed by William Gillespy, "Spectator" office, 1861, page 326.

"Rhubarb, in the same quantities [as Vin de Pommes: or, Apple Wine; see below], and done the same way as apples, adding more sugar, makes a nice cooling drink.

Also green gooseberries, similarly prepared."

Vin de Pommes: or, Apple Wine: "Boil a gallon of water, in it cut up one pound of apples into quarters, and boil them till they can be pulped, pass the liquor through a cullender, boil it up again with half a pound of brown sugar, scum, and bottle for use. Take care not to cork the bottle; keep in cool place."

HISTORIC BACKGROUND

Before the 20th century, people enjoyed a variety of non-alcoholic drinks, which they invariably prepared themselves in their home kitchen. Lemons, cranberries, raspberries, apples, gooseberries, red currants, and ginger were all used as flavourings for beverages. In the spring, the first fresh shoots of rhubarb (sometimes called pie plant) were especially welcomed by Canadians, after the long winter. This rhubarb recipe, collected by a Hamilton printer (or his wife), is simply called "For Spring Drink." Today, we rarely make our own drinks, preferring to buy them in glass or plastic bottles, metal cans, and Tetrapaks, or in powder form; even water is sold.

For Spring Drink continued

OUR MODERN EQUIVALENT

The finished drink is a beautiful pink colour. You may increase or decrease the sugar, as you wish. It tastes best cold, and may be served with the addition of soda water (a 19th-century invention) for a truly thirst-quenching spring drink.

2.5 L	water	20 cups
1 L	chopped rhubarb	4 cups
500 mL	brown sugar	2 cups

Boil: the water and rhubarb together until the rhubarb is soft and can be mashed into a pulp with the back of a spoon

Strain: the rhubarb-and-water mixture through a clean cotton cloth or piece of muslin, placed over a colander or sieve

Add: the brown sugar to the strained juice, and heat until the sugar is dissolved

Yield: about 2 L (9 cups)

