

## **Bangkok Blush**

2 oz. Blue Gin

1 oz. Basil Lemongrass Syrup

1 oz. Strained Lime Juice

### **Blue Gin:**

½ bottle dry gin

3-4 T dried butterfly blue pea flowers

baking soda

### **Basil Lemongrass Syrup:**

1 c. sugar

1 ½c. thai basil (If you cannot get thai basil, just use italian basil and add 1-2 seeds of star anise. And just one prong off the star, not the whole thing.)

2 T sliced lemongrass

2 c. boiling water

### **For Serving:**

Limes (1 oz. lime juice per serving)

Fine-meshed strainer

tea pot, creamer or other container to pour a small amount of lime juice into the finished drink.

Ice

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### **Infuse Gin**

One at a time, remove the green base leaves from the dried flowers, keeping just the colorful petals. Place the petals in a clean jar and cover with gin. You don't need to fill the jar up, just enough to cover the flowers. Stir to saturate the petals. Once they are softened, you can crush them lightly against the side of the jar. This will help speed up the dispersal of the color into the gin. Leave the mixture to sit for a day or two, until it turns very dark blue-purple. Strain out the petals and pour the concentrated color into a clean bottle. Pour in additional gin until it is diluted to your desired color intensity (remembering that the color will be dispersed more when it is mixed into a cocktail.) Most likely, the bottle of gin will have a purplish hue at this point. Add 1/4t. baking soda to the gin and shake to disperse. You can add more baking soda if it is necessary to nudge your gin into the blue range of the spectrum. But go slowly, and add just enough to get the job done. Add just a little and you'll never know it's there, but too much baking soda tastes *terrible*. The color tends to have a more purple appearance when you look through a greater depth. So hold the bottle to the side and look at the color of the gin at the edges to get a more accurate idea of what your gin will look like when it is poured into a cocktail. The infused gin can be made well in advance-- my color infused liquors have shown no signs of losing their brilliance after several weeks. (I'll update if there is any change in the shelf life of the colored gin, but the color seems quite stable.)

## **Make Syrup**

Remove basil leaves from the stems and wash. Slice lemongrass as finely as you can. Lightly bruise the lemongrass under the flat side of your knife. Place sugar, lemongrass and basil leaves (and star anise, if you are using it) in a heat resistant container. Pour in 2c. boiling water and stir to dissolve. Cover the container and let it steep for several hours, until the mixture has cooled to room temperature. Strain the syrup and refrigerate. (Refrigerated syrup will keep for up to two weeks.)

## **Mix Cocktail**

Juice a few limes and pour the juice through a fine-meshed tea strainer or coffee filter. You want this liquid to be as clear as possible to give the finished cocktail its gem-like brilliance.

Measure two ounces of blue gin and one ounce of syrup. Is the color still a nice blue? If so, just charge ahead. If it has edged towards the purple spectrum with the addition of the syrup, you might need to add just a pinch of baking soda to push the pH back toward neutral. Again, go slow, and make sure not to overdo the baking soda. Shake in a cocktail shaker and pour into a martini glass.

To complete the cocktail slowly pour 1 oz. of strained lime juice into the glass. (This would be the recommended moment to stop for a few minutes to bask in the the oohs and ahs.)

## **Tips for Cocktail Brilliance.**

Since the color is the star of this show, it really pays to have a white background. (It is much harder to see the color change against a dark background or competing colors.) A white tablecloth or plate underneath the drinks works wonders.

If you have enough flowers, you can make the drink as intensely blue as you want. BUT I find that you lose some of the brilliance of the color if it is very highly concentrated. When the drink changes colors it will also appear to lighten. So expect that your finished purple drink will look lighter than the initial blue base.