



Fresh ways with old liquor

In the spirit of our eco issue, **Emma Freud** shares her favourite ways to use up leftover booze

If I were to apply for *Mastermind*, Cooking with Alcohol would be my special subject. I studied it for this magazine when I lived in New York with all the passion of an over-keen undergraduate. Now back at home, I have altruistically investigated the way liquor is used in food in the UK, and I can confidently assure you we are whupping the Americans hands down.

Last year, a brilliantly innovative bar popped up in London called Eat Your Drink – imagine the magic of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, only with more alcohol. They sold candy floss that had been infused with martinis, spritzed the air with daiquiri-flavoured perfumes, then showered it with alcoholic bubbles. There was a wall of pipes dispensing cocktails that had been turned into sherbert, with boozy dip dabs to dip into them. Customers could leave with a box of their signature product: gin, rum and whisky-flavoured fruit pastilles, each sweet coming in at 80% alcohol – meaning you can only eat 10 before you have to ditch the car.

Some UK cupcake delivery services are targeting adult customers by lacing their batter with liquor. The Primrose Bakery delivers Bellini or pear martini cupcakes, and Jennifer's Cakes has gone large on strawberry & champagne – a vanilla cupcake with a strawberry & champagne jam centre, finished with a cream cheese & champagne icing.

If you want carb-free treats, have a look at my favourite online shop, *burghbakes.com*. They invented prosecco & rose marshmallows – like an alcoholic Turkish delight – and they have finally managed to find a use for that most revolting of all liqueurs, crème de menthe, which they steep into

their After Eight marshmallows, which you then set adrift into a mug of hot chocolate.

But my favourite liquor-related innovation was Alcoholic Architecture – a 'cloud bar' in London, recently created by Bompas & Parr. Imagine a weird, softly lit room where spirits and mixers, combined in a 1:3 ratio, are released into the air with a humidifier. You are allowed to stay inside for only 30 minutes at a time because the alcohol enters the bloodstream through your lungs and eyeballs. Yup, I just said that.

So what about cooking with alcohol at home? It seems rash to use something still good for drinking, and spirits last for months (rum and tequila), years (vodka) or infinity (bourbon). So the best plan is to use up carbonated liquids as they're all pretty rubbish the next day. The rationale here is that recipes involving cava, beer and cider are not only delicious, but also help the environment. I think.

Have you tried roasting a chicken that has an opened can of beer rammed up its bottom? It sounds insane but tastes great – basted with booze from the inside out. Any type of parsnip soup is better with a few cups of yesterday's cider added to the stock; and an unfinished prosecco, warmed then mixed with some sheets of gelatine and a sweet syrup (agave, maple or sugar), makes a classy alcoholic jelly.

A Freud family favourite is Drunkards Soup. Slowly caramelize some onions with garlic, thyme, a teaspoon of sugar and a splash of

balsamic vinegar until they are deeply golden. Add a bottle of champagne or cava, simmer for 15 minutes, season and then float a small camembert on top before serving. Boof!

Despite the long shelf lives, there may come a day when you look at your ancient experimental party bottles or Duty Free mistakes and decide they haven't got long left for this world. At that moment, consider BYOC (Bring Your Own Cocktail, *byoc.co.uk*) – a new breed of UK bars that don't have drinks licences. They're speakeasy style – you take them any leftover bottles of spirits and the bartenders turn whatever they get into cocktails using their own range of homemade syrups, cordials and mixers. Entry is £25, and you get bottomless cocktails for the next two hours.

Alternatively, this may be the moment to start thinking about alcoholic ice cream. If you're keen and dedicated, you could make a gin & tonic gelato. But if you're lazy and hungry, you just need to perfect the 'shot of alcohol poured over ice cream' trick, and then dream a little about perfect pairings: vanilla ice cream with a drizzle of amaretto; lemon sorbet with a shot of ice-cold tequila; chocolate ice cream with a dousing of salted caramel vodka. I have reluctantly tested all these on your behalf and they are beautiful ways to end a meal. Trust me on this, I'm working towards a PhD.

Good Food contributing editor *Emma Freud* is a journalist and broadcaster. [@emmafreud](#)

White Russian tart

Not counting a messy incident with one too many Snowballs in my teens, a White Russian was the first cocktail I got drunk on, and I've had a soft spot for it ever since. So I've taken that memory and turned it into a pie. It's one of the most delicious puddings I've created, and is also a charitable act for an old, half-drunk bottle of Kahlúa.

SERVES 12 **PREP 15 mins** plus a few hrs chilling **COOK 5 mins**

For the base

350g dark chocolate digestives

60g butter

For the filling

200g white marshmallows

150ml whole milk

5 tbsp vodka

5 tbsp Kahlúa

400ml double cream

To finish

a few squares of dark chocolate

pinch of freshly ground nutmeg

1 Put the biscuits and butter in a blender and blitz into crumbs. Press them into the base and up the sides of a deep 23cm fluted tart tin, then put in the fridge to chill while you make the filling.

2 Put the marshmallows and milk in a pan and warm through gently while whisking. When it's close to boiling, take it off the heat but keep stirring. Once the marshmallows are fully dissolved, whisk in the vodka and Kahlúa, then leave it to cool completely.

3 Whisk the cream until it's pillowy, then add the cooled marshmallow mixture. Once combined, pile it all onto your tart base and chill for a few hours. Before you serve it, grate some dark chocolate and a little nutmeg over the top, then try not to eat it all before serving.

PER SERVING 465 kcal • fat 33g • saturates 20g • carbs 31g • sugars 18g • fibre 1g • protein 4g • salt 0.4g



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