Ingredients

In undertaking to supply you with a wide variety of soda recipes, I have at times employed ingredients that might be new to you. Use this partial list as a guide to help you understand, procure, and use your ingredients to their best advantage.

Sweeteners

Sweetness is one of the defining characteristics of soda. Although it is easy to make soft drinks with less sugar than is found in commercial products, all sodas need some sweetness.

Granulated Sugars

Granulated sugars must be dissolved in liquid before they can be added to beverages. The easiest way to do this is to make simple syrup (see below), a solution of equal parts sugar and water. Any granulated sugar can be cooked into simple syrup.

Granulated white sugar is the most common sugar, extracted from the sap of sugarcane and sugar beets (pure cane sugar uses only sugarcane sap). During refinement, the syrupy juice (molasses) is separated from the sugar crystals, leaving behind white table sugar.

Brown sugar is granulated sugar that retains some of its molasses or has had molasses added back to it. It has a slight savory character that is well suited for root beers and colas.

Raw sugar is cane sugar that has been partially refined but has not been washed of all of its molasses. Raw sugar is sold in various forms, including turbinado sugar, Demerara sugar, and muscovado sugar. It can be used in any soda in the same manner as granulated white sugar and brown sugar.

Evaporated coconut palm sugar is a pale brown sugar made from the sap of the coconut palm, with a mild honeylike flavor. Its glycemic index is just about one-third that of cane sugar. It can be used in any soda in the same manner as granulated white sugar and brown sugar.

Making Simple Syrup

Combine equal parts water and sugar in a saucepan over medium heat. Stir just until the sugar dissolves; when the sugar granules are no longer visible, stop stirring. The syrup will continue to clear as it approaches a boil. As soon as it comes to a boil, remove the pan from the heat and let cool to room temperature. Store the syrup in the refrigerator, where it will keep for up to two months.