

# Akvavit

The Water of Life



World Championship Akvavit  
Competition Recipes



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World Championship Akvavit  
Competition Recipes

Compiled and Edited  
by  
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## AQUAVIT or AKVAVIT?

The word aquavit is derived from Latin aqua vitae, "water of life." The Scandinavian spelling is akvavit. Akvavit or aquavit is a flavored spirit that is principally produced in Scandinavia, where it has been produced since the 15th century. Akvavit gets its distinctive flavor from spices and herbs, and the main spice should (according to the European Union) be caraway or dill. It typically contains 40% alcohol by volume. The EU has established a minimum of 37.5% ABV for akvavit to be named as such.

The following is considered to be the earliest known reference to 'aquavit'. It is from a letter dated April 13, 1531 from the Danish Lord of Bergenshus castle, Eske Bille to Olav Engelbrektsson, the last Roman Catholic Archbishop of Norway.

*"Dear lord, will your grace know that I send your grace some water with messenger Jon Teiste which is called Aqua vite and the same water helps for all his illness that a man can have internally."*

*-- Lord of Bergenshus castle, Eske Bille*

In the Scandinavian countries, unlike today, it was not uncommon for average people to distill their own alcohol. Akvavits were created by average people because the distillation of alcohol was not refined and a by-product was fusel alcohol (or fusel oil). According to Wikipedia, the word 'fusel' is German for 'bad liquor.' To counter the bad taste of poorly distilled alcohol, spices, herbs and fruits were added to the alcohol to improve its drinkability. The practice of flavoring alcohol caught on, and has become a Scandinavian tradition.

Amongst Swedish-Americans, akvavit has been a staple holiday drink. For many years, OP Anderson dominated the market as the premier akvavit in the US. About 15 years ago, however, Pernod-Ricard Distributor in France bought the rights to import OP Anderson and decided not to bring it into the US. Later, other akvavit distributors have followed suit. This gap necessitated a return to ‘the old ways’ wherein consumers began to infuse spices, herbs and fruit.

Akvavit infusing began in earnest in Vasa District 12 in 2010 after Scott Schulkin was speaking to members of Fylgia Lodge in San Francisco about a failed attempt to infuse Lingonberries in Vodka. Lodge members insisted he try again. After researching recipes on the internet and settling on Andreas Viestad’s Mock Aquavit recipe, Scott presented two bottles in a room party during the 2010 District Convention. So well received was the akvavit, it soon became a tradition to infuse at one monthly cultural meeting and to have a tasting at the next monthly cultural meeting.

David Jansson (then District Master) was invited to one of Fylgia’s infusion meetings and the subsequent tasting meeting. Dave suggested moving the tasting to the Sweden Day celebration at Sveadal. On the second year of the competition, then new Vasa member Jim Melin from Svea Lodge suggested renaming the competition the Akvavit Kryddat Brännvin World Championship. The rest is history.

The world Champion Akvavit Competition began in 2013 with Master Akvavit Infuser Scott Schulkin organizing the very first akvavit competition at Sveadal. There were 24 entries and the winners for the 3 categories were:



Most Traditional<sup>1</sup>..... Scott Schulkin/Bob Olson  
Best Presentation..... Catherine Lipscomb  
Best Tasting..... Scott Schulkin

In 2014 the competition swelled to 36 entries and the winners of the competitions were the Vasa Ladies who demanded tiaras for the following year:

Most Traditional..... Catherine Lipscomb  
Best Tasting..... Victoria Fedor-Thurman  
Best Presentation..... Victoria Fedor-Thurman

2015 brought the competition into World Class Fame as the first International Competition for Akvavit. This was encouraged by Jim Melin who wanted to win one of the famous Akvavit Championship hats. Jim arranged to have 3 judges for the competition. Roberth Sundell, owner and master chef of Pläj Scandinavian Restaurant in San Francisco, Alexander Hult, professional hockey player and master chef of Hult's Restaurant in Los Gatos and the honorable Reverend Ben Hutchinson from Michigan. With the word out, there were close to 50 entries and the winners were:

Most Traditional..... Bob Olson  
Best Presentation..... Jim Melin  
Best Tasting..... Greta Anderson  
Dave Jansson  
Catherine Lipscomb

The most recent known reference to akvavit was overheard from Jim Melin, Vice District Master of District 12, Chair of Svea Lodge in San Jose and owner /Master Distiller of the House of Melin.

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<sup>1</sup>Traditional akvavit contains dill and/or caraway.

*“Dear lord, will your Grace please let me win the Triple Crown of the Akvavit Kryddat Brännvin World Championship.”*

So, like many things in life, things come full circle. The earliest known reference to akvavit was in an April letter. In District 12 we have a series of infusions in April. The earliest recorded utterance about akvavit was from Lord of Bergenshus castle, Eske Bille. The most recent was from Master Distiller of the House of Melin, James Melin.

This book includes traditional recipes and newer recipes. By infusing, you will be carrying on a Scandinavian tradition going back hundreds of years. Learn the recipes. Infuse and join in the competition, by doing so you will be joining a local tradition which began several years ago. More importantly, the more competitors, the less chance Jim Melin has to win the Triple Crown!

Skål,

Corky Peterson and Scott Schulkin

## BASIC PREPARATION

Here's the basic process and a few suggested ingredients – feel free to experiment with your own combinations to create a personal family label!

Some commonly used spices and herbs for flavoring Aq-uavit are caraway seeds, fennel seeds, star anise or anise seeds, cumin seeds, coriander seeds, whole cloves, cinnamon sticks, juniper berries, fresh mint, lemon verbena, allspice, peppercorns, cardamom pods, fresh ginger root.

Fruits and berries to infuse along with spices: raspberries, blackberries, cloudberry (look for frozen bags of cloudberry in specialty Scandinavian food stores), marionberries, lingonberries, peaches, fresh or dried apricots, fresh or dried apples, cranberries, cherries, prunes, lemon peel, lime peel, orange peel, grapefruit peel.

Add a combination of spices, berries, and / or citrus peel to a 1- liter bottle of potato or grain-based vodka (potato vodka is preferable, if you can find it locally). Sugar or honey can be added as well, if you prefer a sweeter taste.

If using spice seeds such as caraway, anise, fennel, dill, or coriander, first toast the seeds very lightly in a dry frying pan over medium heat. This will help to release their essential oils. You also can use a mortar and pestle to break up the spices also releasing flavor.

Place the lid on the bottle and place on a counter or in a cupboard out of direct sunlight. Let ingredients infuse for at least two weeks.

After two weeks, sample the aquavit. If you would prefer a stronger, spicier flavor, allow to sit for another 1-2 weeks (the flavor intensifies the longer that the bottle is left to infuse).

Some prefer to add larger quantities of spices in a smaller amount of vodka over a shorter time. They would add about 2-3 tablespoons for 3 days, mixing several times each day.

Once the flavors have blended to your taste, strain the aquavit through a fine-meshed sieve or through cheesecloth to remove the solids and clarify the liquid. Return to bottle and store in the freezer until use. Aquavit should always be served ice-cold; it gains a smooth, syrupy consistency when chilled.

## **SCOTT'S SPECIAL TIPS**

Infuse Citrus separately-It has a stronger flavor that can over-power the main ingredients. Make sure you do not get any pith (white stuff) only the oil and the skin.

Check on the infusion at 10 days. If too strong, dilute with vodka.

Consider running your vodka (before infusing) through a charcoal filter (a clean new filter). Perhaps several times. Charcoal filtration has a dramatic effect on the flavor of vodkas.

One akvavit infuser infuses all of his ingredients separately and then mixes them to taste. He also infuses any green ingredients (like dill) under refrigeration, he says they can taste "green".

Separately infuse a few tablespoons of wormwood in about 4 oz. or less of vodka. Add a little to your infused aquavit at first and adjust to taste. If you use a minimal amount it tightens up the finish.

Filter your infused aquavit at least once through a paper coffee filter to reduce sediment and to improve clarity.

Consider adding a teaspoon or less of sherry or marsala wine to infused aquavit, it creates a smoother finish.

Remember you have to taste the aquavit after it has chilled in the freezer for several hours. What tastes good warm may not have the same flavor cold.

When experimenting with a new blend, make a small amount of the main ingredient then blend in very small measured amounts of the other extracts. Be sure to carefully make notes as you go along.

Elderflower in vodka (3 or 4 tablespoons of dried elderflower to 4 ounces of vodka). This is a main ingredient in a Skåne aquavit. It is floral and light and blends well with other ingredients.

The zest (color part only) of an aromatic orange goes well in an aquavit. Using a vegetable peeler, carefully peel an orange into about 4 ounces of vodka. Try to get the oils out and avoid any of the white skin. If you use a funnel then be sure to pour vodka through the funnel to get all the oil out. Remember different oranges taste different. Citrus infuses faster than other ingredients so it is best to infuse it separately

An apple will add a nice complexity, a mild sweetness and can be a nice complement to citrus and/or elderflower. If you prefer a more floral direction then consider reducing the amount of caraway in your main aquavit blend.

Fresh dill can be infused with one bunch covered in vodka. One renowned chef prefers to infuse it in the refrigerator. A little dill goes a long way and too much and you will think you are drinking pickle juice.

A one pound package of fresh apricots covered in vodka in a jar makes a great apricot infusion. Add this to taste to your favorite recipe to taste. A small amount will add a mild fruitiness and sweetness which has a taming effect on the aquavit.

Infuse 2-3 tablespoons of wormwood in about 4 oz. of vodka. This is the main ingredient in Absinthe.

Ginger root is a great additive. Peel the skin with a teaspoon (thank you Martha Stewart), then cut up a small piece of the ginger root and cover with vodka in a jar. A little bit blends well with fruits.

Peel the horseradish with a spoon, dice and cover with vodka. This produces a nice hearty flavor.

## RECIPES

### Traditional Akvavit

by  
Jim Melin

1 tablespoon of dill  
1 tablespoon of caraway  
1 tablespoon of fennel  
3 cloves of anise  
1 cinnamon stick  
1 small orange rinds (carefully grated with no white pith)  
1 bottle akvavit

Add the dill, caraway, fennel, anise and cinnamon to a dry frying pan. Stir for about a minute, just to release the essence. Cool and add to the akvavit and let set 2-3 weeks mixing occasionally. Filter into the bottle. In the meantime about 3-4 days before ready add a small amount of vodka to the orange rind. Add this to the akvavit.

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### Pear Flavored Akvavit

by  
Jim Melin

1 pear  
1/3 lemon peeled  
2 cinnamon sticks  
2 tablespoons of honung honey  
1 bottle vodka

Combine and let set 2-3 weeks mixing occasionally. Filter back into the bottle and enjoy.

## **Peppermint Akvavit**

by  
Jim Melin

peppermint extract  
peppermint crushed sticks  
1 tablespoon of elderberry Seeds  
1 tablespoon of coriander  
3 cinnamon sticks  
3 strawberries  
1 bottle vodka

Mix and let set for 2-3 weeks with occasionally mixing.  
Filter back into the vodka bottle.

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## **Sweetened Akvavit**

by  
Jim Melin

6 tablespoons of honung honey (Swedish whipped honey)  
1 tablespoon of caraway seeds  
1 tablespoon of cardamom  
half orange rinds (grated avoiding the white)  
one-third lemon rinds (grated avoiding the white)  
1 bottle vodka

Heat the cardamom and caraway in a dry seeds to release the flavor and add to the vodka along with the honey, orange rind and lemon rind. Mix the bottle occasionally for 2-3 weeks until the desired flavor.



## **Pear, Lemon, Ginger, Honey**

by  
Jim Melin

1/2 pear  
1/4 lemon  
1/3 ginger root  
2 cinnamon sticks  
2 tablespoons of honung Honey  
1 bottle vodka

Combine everything and let set 2-3 weeks with occasionally mixing. Filter back into the original bottle and enjoy.

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## **Plum Flavored Akvavit**

by  
Jim Melin

1 Cup (8 ounces) of freshly squeezed plum juice  
2 tablespoons of honung honey  
1 cinnamon stick  
1 large vanilla bean  
2 sliced small Mandarin oranges  
1 bottle vodka

Combine everything and allow to set 2-3 weeks with occasionally mixing. Filter into the bottle and enjoy.

**Andreas Viestad's Mock Aquavit**  
by  
Chuck Lipscomb

2 teaspoons caraway seeds  
1 teaspoon fennel seed  
2 teaspoons dill seeds  
2 star anise  
1 tablespoon coriander seed  
1 whole clove  
1 cinnamon stick, 1-inch long (optional)  
2 teaspoons cumin seeds (optional)  
1 liter potato vodka

Open the vodka bottle, add all the remaining ingredients, and cover tightly. Let stand in a cool, dark place for 2 to 3 weeks, shaking every 3 or 4 days – how long you let it sit depends on how strong you want it, so taste it after 2 weeks to see if you want to let it go longer.

When it's as strong as you'd like, strain the solids through a sieve and discard them, then transfer the aquavit back into the bottle.

To serve: place your aquavit in the freezer until chilled and you can also place your 1 ounce tall glasses in the refrigerator until chilled – then serve (ask your Scandinavian friends about toasting practices with aquavit, as it can be rather complicated).

Note: some people prefer non-potato vodka – use whatever you like.

## Andreas Viestad's Mock Aquavit

by

Scott Schulkin

2 teaspoons caraway seeds

2 teaspoons dill seeds

1 tablespoon coriander seed

1 teaspoon fennel seed

1 star anise

1 whole clove

1 liter potato vodka

A little Marsala wine optional after aging

1. Open the vodka bottle, add all the remaining ingredients (Note: I usually warm all the spices in a dry frying pan until they begin to release their essence), and cover tightly.
2. Let stand in a cool, dark place for 2 to 3 weeks, shaking every 3 or 4 days – (I shake once a day) how long you let it sit depends on how strong you want it, so taste it after 2 weeks to see if you want to let it go longer. (NOTE – I generally have found most people like the Aquavit better after about 12 days. I have kept it up to 3 weeks – it becomes more like Underberg or another aperitif or digestive).
3. When it's as strong as you'd like, strain the solids through a sieve and discard them, then transfer the aquavit back into the bottle. If it becomes too strong, you can dilute it with a little plain Absolute or other vodka.
4. You can add a little orange rind or lemon rind. A little goes a long way.

5. To serve: place your aquavit in the freezer until chilled and you can also place your 1 ounce tall glasses in the refrigerator until chilled – then serve.

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## **Viking Energy Drink**

by  
Mikael Peterson

1.75 liters Absolut vodka  
3 tablespoons fennel seeds  
3 tablespoons caraway seeds

Carefully grate the rind of one orange avoiding the pith (white part) .

Use about 8 ounces of the vodka and carefully stir the fennel and caraway seeds in a dry frying pan to release the essence. Add to the vodka cover tightly and shake well. Let it set for about 3 days shaking it occasionally. Filter it back into the original bottle (can use a coffee filter). Separately add the orange rind to a small separate portion of vodka or absolute and shake occasionally 3 days. Add to the spiced flavored akvavit and adjust the vodka until the desired amount of orange flavor. Careful using the orange because it can be overbearing.

Let it set 4-7 days for the flavors to blend and mellow. Chill well and enjoy.

## **Swedish Son in Law's**

by

Kurt Pfannkuch

1.75 liters decent grade vodka like Smirnoff  
3 tablespoons fennel seeds  
3 tablespoons caraway seeds

Use about 8 ounces of the vodka and carefully stir the fennel and caraway seeds in a dry frying pan to release the essence. Add to the vodka and cover tightly and shake well. Let it set for about 3 days shaking it occasionally. Filter it back into the original bottle (can use a coffee filter). Let it set 4-7 days for the flavors to blend and mellow. Chill well and enjoy.

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## **Pomegranate Akvavit**

by

Corky Peterson

1 fresh pomegranate  
1 liter of vodka or absolute

Carefully remove all the seeds from the pomegranate. Dry the seeds about 3 days. One way is to spread the seeds on a paper towel in the oven with only the oven light on to create a little bit of heat.

When the water is removed add the dried seeds to about 8 ounces of Absolute or other vodka and shake occasionally for three days. Dilute to the desired taste with the remaining vodka.

**Traditional Akvavit**  
by  
Corky Peterson

3 tablespoons whole coriander seeds  
2 tablespoons whole fennel seeds  
1 tablespoons caraway seeds  
1 tablespoons dill seed  
1 liter vodka  
6 whole black peppercorns  
2 whole cloves

With a mortar and pestle, lightly crush the coriander, fennel, caraway, and dill seed.

In a large, airtight glass container, combine the vodka with the crushed spices, peppercorns, and cloves. Cover and let stand at room temperature for 2 weeks, gently shaking the jar every 2 or 3 days. Strain the vodka into 4 clean 8-oz. glass bottles. Discard the spices.

## **Grandfathers Akvavit**

by

Corky Peterson

1 tablespoon caraway seeds  
1 teaspoon fennel seed  
1 large sprig  
1 large sprig fresh dill  
good-quality vodka, or other neutral spirit -- 1 (750-ml)  
bottle

Heat an ungreased skillet over medium heat on the stovetop. Add the caraway and fennel seeds to the skillet and toast, stirring occasionally, until they start to give off their aroma, 1 or 2 minutes. Remove from heat and pour the seeds into a small bowl to cool.

Add the dill sprig to a 1-quart glass Mason-style jar, along with the cooled caraway and fennel seeds. Pour the vodka into the jar and seal well. Let the vodka steep in a cool, dark place for 2 to 3 days.

Strain the aquavit through a coffee filter-lined funnel into a decorative bottle, and seal with a cork or other stopper. Store in the freezer.

To serve: Pour ice-cold aquavit into small shot glasses, give a toast, and bottoms up. For goodness' sake, don't sip! Throw back the shot all at once.

## Uncle Ole's Akvavit

by

Lina Peterson

2 teaspoons caraway seeds  
2 teaspoons fennel seeds  
2 cardamom pods, crushed  
2 whole cloves  
1 medium lemon, rinsed and dried  
1 medium orange, rinsed and dried  
1 750-ml bottle vodka, such as Absolut or Svedka  
1 teaspoon granulated sugar

Toast the caraway, fennel, cardamom, and cloves in a small frying pan over medium heat, shaking occasionally until fragrant, about 3 minutes. Remove from the heat and set aside. Using a vegetable peeler, remove a quarter of the peel from both the lemon and orange. Avoid removing the white pith; set the peels aside.

Remove about 2 tablespoons of the vodka from the bottle. Either drink it or discard it. Place the toasted spices, lemon and orange peels, and sugar into the bottle. Cover tightly.

Let the vodka infuse at room temperature (choose a spot that is neither too warm nor too cold) for 2 weeks, turning and gently shaking the bottle once a day. After 2 weeks, taste the aquavit; let it stand longer as needed.

Strain the aquavit through a fine-mesh strainer into a large liquid measuring cup; discard the solids. Transfer the strained aquavit to a clean bottle with a tight fitting lid and store it in the freezer.



## **Eric Eriksson's Delight**

2 teaspoons caraway seeds  
2 teaspoons anise seeds (or 2 star anise)  
1 whole clove  
peel from 1/2 orange (carefully peel the orange, leaving  
the bitter white behind)  
1 quart bottle vodka

Heat the spices in a dry frying pan then add to the bottle of vodka. Keep out of the light let it set for 2 weeks shaking daily. Filter the akvavit into a quart bottle.

Add the orange peel to a small amount of vodka and let set 3 days shaking several times.

Add the orange extract to the spice mixture to your taste.

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### **Secret Akvavit** by Carolina Gustavsdotter

1/2 cup whole cranberries  
1/2 cup halved cranberries  
1 tablespoon sliced fresh ginger root  
1 cinnamon stick  
peel from 1/2 orange  
1 bottle potato based alcohol

Add the first 4 ingredients to 1 bottle of vodka in a Mason jar and let set for 2 weeks shaking occasionally. Filter back into the alcohol bottle. Infuse the orange peel (without the bitter white stuff) in a small amount of alcohol. Add to the spiced mixture to taste.

## **Summer Delight**

by

Per Zachariasson

1/2 teaspoon anise seeds  
1 cup sliced dried peaches or apricots  
1/2 cup fresh mint leaves  
1 bottle vodka

Mix everything together and let set 2 weeks with occasional mixing. Filter back into the alcohol bottle.

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## **Summer Akvavit**

by

Swen Larsson

1 cup fresh mint leaves  
1 tablespoon sliced fresh ginger root  
1 tablespoon sugar or honey  
peel from 1/2 lemon or orange  
1 quart bottle potato alcohol

Add the mint, ginger and honey to the alcohol in a quart jar and infuse for about 2-3 weeks mixing occasionally. Filter back into the alcohol bottle.

Infuse the peel of the orange or lemon (trying to avoid the white pulp) for about 3 days in a small amount of alcohol for 3 days, mixing occasionally. Add to the mint alcohol mixture.

## **Favorite Recipe**

by

Lars Swenson

2 teaspoons. caraway seeds  
peel from one lime  
1/4 cup lemon verbena.

Combine the three ingredients in a bottle of vodka and let set for 2-3 weeks. Mix occasionally then filter and enjoy.

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## **After Dinner Akvavit**

by

Per Pettersson

2 crushed cardamom pods  
1 cup raspberries  
1 tablespoon sugar or honey  
1 whole clove  
peel from 1/2 orange (without the white pith)  
1 quart vodka

Mix everything in a quart jar and let stand for 2-3 weeks. Strain through a coffee filter and return to the bottle and enjoy.

## **Favorite Akvavit**

by  
Lena Eriksson

2 teaspoon anise seeds (or 2 star anise)  
1/2 cup dried apple slices  
1/2 cup dried apricots  
2 sliced prunes  
1 cinnamon stick  
1 bottle vodka

Mix everything in a jar and let set for 2-3 weeks mixing occasionally. Filter back into the vodka bottle and enjoy.

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## **Spiced Aquavit**

by  
Christen Larsson

1 navel orange  
2 teaspoons fennel seeds  
1 teaspoon caraway seeds  
3 whole star anise  
1 liter Absolut vodka

Wash and dry the orange. Beginning at one end, with a vegetable peeler carefully remove a long strip of zest in a spiral from half of the orange. Add with spices to the bottle of vodka. Let stand at room temperature 3 days. Freeze aquavit in the bottle at least 8 hours or until ice-cold.

## **Homemade Aquavit**

by  
Melissa Clark

3 tablespoons whole coriander seeds  
2 tablespoons fennel seeds  
1 tablespoon caraway seeds  
1 tablespoon dill seeds  
1 liter of vodka  
6 whole black peppercorns  
2 whole cloves

With a mortar and pestle, lightly crush the coriander, fennel, caraway and dill seeds. In a large airtight container combine the vodka with the crushed spices, peppercorns and cloves. Cover and let stand at room temperature for 2 weeks, gently shaking the jar every 2 or 3 days. Strain the vodka into 4 clean 8 ounce bottles. Discard the spices.

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## **Fig and Cardamom**

by  
Laura Gardner

½ cup cardamom pods  
½ cup dried black mission figs  
750 ml vodka

Toast the cardamom pods and combine with the vodka. Infuse for 1 week. Wash and dry the figs and half the figs and add to the infusion for 4-5 days. Strain and store.

## **Päron Akavit (Pear Akavit)**

by  
T. J. Naim

You'll want to have a food dehydrator (or two), but if you dry fruit in your oven, you can go that route.

### Ingredients

1.5 liters Costco American vodka (or other nicely filtered vodka)

6 lbs. pears from Costco (or other vendor), I like Bartlett or D 'Anjou. The pears can be firm, but it's better if they're nicely ripe. In the case of Bartlett this will be indicated by the skin going from green to yellow.

### Optional:

Lemon juice in a bowl to a depth that will allow you to bathe the pear slices.

Dried flavorings to complement the pear flavor.\*

Part the First: Set up your dehydrator and bowl of lemon juice. I first slice the pears into quarters, then core and peel them, but you could peel first, etc. Once they are in quarters, then slice them into evenly-thick shapes. I generally do this along the profile, but the point is to have them of even thickness, though it's ok if it's not perfect. As you slice, let the slice drop into the bowl of lemon juice so it gets coated (this preserves color, so it's not absolutely necessary for our purpose, but is if you plan to just dry pears and use them as stocking stuffers). Once you've got several slices coated in the bowl, remove them and let the excess juice drain back into the bowl, before laying them out on the dehydrator. If your dehydrator is like mine, drying will take overnight. Remember to rotate the racks.

Part the Second: Whenever the pears are dried, remove them from the racks and place in a bowl. Empty the vodka bottle

into another container. Drop half to all the dried pears in the empty vodka bottle. Refill the bottle with vodka. Cap and set aside in a cool, dark place. Repeat with another clean empty bottle. Reserve any leftover vodka for a vodka martini for you and your helpers for a job well done. Reserve any dried pears as gifts for helpers or snacks for your patient children (there aren't likely to be any as these are delicious!).

Part the Third: After about 3 days the liquid should have a golden color. This will deepen over several more days. After 3-10 days take a small taste. Do you like the flavor (remember it will be sharper than when chilled)? If pear flavor not noticeable, return to storage and allow to develop. A month should work fine.

Part the Fourth: If you want, drain the liquid into another container and remove all or some of the now reconstituted pears. I still haven't figured out what to do with this other than use as compost or take to a sorority party to mix into Jell-O shots. Return the liquid to the bottle (combine with liquid from the other bottle or add back some vodka to top up). Place in the freezer for at least several hours.

Part the Fifth: For safety's sake, pour some into a fifth bottle, keep in freezer and invite 1-3 friends over. Enjoy a good meal, then take out the fifth. Pour some into shot or sake' glasses and sip while enjoying the company of friends. By the end of the evening you'll all be better looking and have had a wonderful evening. Be sure to have a designated driver or make up the spare beds and put a sleeping bag for someone in the bathtub.

\*I have experimented with other flavors, such as dried ginger and dried cloves. Balance is very important, so if you're adding a strong flavor, add it first to the vodka, let it reach a mild flavor first and then remove it. Only then add the dried pears and let the flavor develop to the point you like.

## **Spela med Apelsiner**

by  
Scott Schulkin

500 ml Absolut  
1 tablespoon coriander  
rind of ½ orange

Warm the coriander in a pan then add to about 400 ml of the Absolut. Carefully peel the orange into a jar to catch any oil from the zest. Add the other 100 ml of Absolut to the orange. Incubate both for 1 week. Combine and strain into a jar.

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## **Apple Pie Akvavit**

by  
Corky Peterson

1 fresh apple like Fuji  
1 bottle Absolute vodka  
½ cinnamon stick

Peel the apple and cut into small pieces. Dry the apple in a food dehydrator or place in an oven with the light on for 2-3 days in order to remove the water from the apple. Place the dried apple and 2 cups of vodka in a glass jar for 3 days, stirring occasionally. In a separate jar place ½ cinnamon stick in ½ to 1 cup of vodka for an equal amount of time. The cinnamon flavor is very strong. Combine the apple and cinnamon in the portions that you prefer. I like a hint of cinnamon so combine it with one portion cinnamon to four portions apple. Mix well, chill and enjoy.



## FOOD TO GO WITH AKVAVIT

Gravlax is salmon that's been cured with salt and sugar and infused with the flavor of fresh dill and sometimes other aromatics and spices. Unlike the lox that we eat on bagels, gravlax is not cold-smoked. The *grav-* part of its name comes from the Scandinavian word for "to dig" (it shares the same root with our word "grave") and *-lax*, which just means "salmon." In essence, the name is telling you that it's "buried salmon," which is how gravlax was apparently originally made: buried in sand on the beach until fermented. Sometimes it was wrapped in birch bark and pine needles before being buried.

Today, the only burying that goes on is in heaps of dill and the dry brine of sugar and salt, and there's not really any significant fermentation to speak of these days—there are no funky flavors to develop a taste for, just the clean, mildly salty flavor of lightly cured salmon and dill.

Start with 1 pound sashimi grade salmon with the skin on. Give the salmon a 10 minute bath in salt water.

Recipe:

1 lb. sashimi grade Salmon  
4 tablespoons Sugar  
6 tablespoons Salt  
1 teaspoon pepper

Optional:

1 teaspoon coriander seed  
1 teaspoon caraway seed  
1 teaspoon fennel seed

Combine the salt, sugar and pepper in a bowl. Using a

mortar and pestle add any spices that you would like. Rub half the mixture onto the skin side of the salmon. Place several dill branches in the bottom of a baking dish and place skin side down on top. Rub the remainder of the cure on top and side of the fish. Cover with dill then plastic wrap. Place heavy weight cans on top and refrigerate for 24 hours. This will help press out moisture from the fish. Flip the fish over with the skin side up and cover with dill and fresh plastic wrap. Add the cans and refrigerate 24-48 hours. Using a very sharp knife carefully slice the salmon at a angle very thinly.

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**Hovmästarsås**  
Mustard Dill Sauce for Gravlax

2 tablespoons honey mustard (or 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard and 1 tablespoon honey)  
1 tablespoon white vinegar  
3 tablespoon grape seed oil or canola oil  
2 tablespoon chopped fresh dill  
Salt and pepper to taste

Whisk mustard and vinegar in small bowl to blend. Gradually whisk in oil. Stir in chopped dill and salt. Season with ground black pepper. (Sauce can be made 3 days ahead. Cover and chill.)

## Mustard Sauce

3 oz. Swedish mustard (Slott's mustard)  
¾ oz. sugar  
1 oz. wine vinegar  
8 oz. oil (not olive oil)  
2 oz. dill  
Salt and pepper to taste

Mix ingredients and slowly add in oil. Dill should be cut coarsely and added last. Keep cool.

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## Mustard Sauce

3 tablespoons white wine vinegar  
2 tablespoons coarse-grained prepared German or Swedish mustard  
1 tablespoon dry mustard  
¾ teaspoon salt  
¼ teaspoon ground white pepper  
¼ cup sugar  
1/8 teaspoon ground cardamom  
½ cup olive oil or vegetable oil

In a small bowl, use a whisk to beat vinegar, prepared and dry mustards, salt, pepper, sugar and cardamom. Gradually whisk in oil until sauce is thick. Prepare the sauce at least 2 hours before serving to let the flavors blend.

Makes about 1 cup.

## Gravlax Recipe #2

One 3 1/2- to 4-pound salmon fillet  
1 cup sugar  
1/2 cup salt  
1 teaspoon dill seeds  
1 tablespoon freshly ground pepper  
2 bunches of fresh dill (don't skimp on the dill, for this is what gives gravlax its unique flavor).

While gravlax is normally prepared using a salmon fillet with the skin on, it works equally as well to use a skinless fillet if that is what is available at your local market.

Rinse the fish and pat dry with paper towels. Examine the fish for small, opaque pin bones, feeling down along the middle line and along the outer edges of the fillet. Remove any bones with tweezers or needle-nosed pliers. Cut the fillet into two equal halves.

Combine the sugar and salt, and then cover both sides of each fillet half with the mixture. Wash and roughly chop the bunches of dill, stems and all. Sprinkle the flesh side of each fillet half with the dill seeds and ground pepper.

Next, place one fillet half, flesh side up, in a dish just large enough to hold it. Place the chopped dill on top of this fillet, and then cover with the second half, flesh side down. It will look like you have a huge raw fish-and-dill sandwich!

Cover the dish lightly with plastic wrap and let marinate at room temperature until the sugar-salt mixture has melted into the fillet (but no more than 6 hours. Skip this step entirely if you are making your gravlax in hot weather).

Place a small pan or plate on top of the plastic wrap-covered gravlax. Weight the plate lightly, using a few rocks or canned items (in lieu of the traditional sand and dirt!). Refrigerate the weighted gravlax for at least 2 days (48 hours) and up to a week.

Every 12 hours, turn the fish “sandwich” over in the brining liquid that has accumulated in the bottom of the pan to ensure that all parts are evenly marinated. Re-cover with the plastic wrap and the weighted pan and return to the refrigerator.

Remove the gravlax from the refrigerator. Scrape off most of the dill and seasonings; pat dry with paper towels.

**As a reminder:** if you are not using **a)** sushi-grade fish or **b)** commercially frozen fish, this is the point where you will need to wrap the gravlax well and place it in a -10° F (-23° C) freezer for 7 days.

Using a sharp knife, cut the cured gravlax into paper-thin slices, pulling each slice away from the skin (if your fillet has the skin on). Layer the gravlax slices on crispbread or rye bread.

Traditionally accompanied by sweet dill mustard sauce (in Swedish, *hovmästarsås*), gravlax also pairs well with capers and finely chopped onions as an appetizer or with a variety of garnishes on an open-faced sandwich.

Gravlax can be stored in the refrigerator for up to a week and in the freezer for up to a month.

## **Sill Preparation**

by  
Scott Schulkin

The vinegar we use in America is roughly half the strength of Swedish vinegar (I don't recall the numbers but let's say 5% vs 12%). Most of the European recipes say to add equal amounts vinegar to water. We don't do that since our vinegar is already watered down.

Make a batch of the vinegar and sugar solution and then simply add the different spices and ingredients (as opposed to making each batch of marinade separately). Cut the carrots, onions (we also use leaks), peppercorns, perhaps even juniper berries ahead of time. Cook the vinegar mixture then layer the veggies and fish then repeat.

To make sill, you have to buy salted herring. It's best to buy them as filets. The ones I buy are stored in salt brine. You then soak them overnight in fresh water and change the water a couple of times. I also take each fish and remove as many pin bones as I can. I have a tweezer-like tool I use (but tweezers or very clean needle-nose pliers would work). I bend the fish, feel the bones and pull them out. There are two rows of bones running along the 'seam' in the middle of the fish. (It will be apparent when you see the filet). My understanding is that most delicatessens DO NOT bother to remove the bones, as apparently the vinegar will make them a non-issue. I just like being careful.

After soaking (and deboning if you want), cut the fish into whatever size you want and then proceed as above. The fish need to be in the vinegar for at least 24 hours.

If you want to add brandy, vodka or Aquavit, it is best to do so earlier the same day. If you do it too early, there is a chance that it will soften the fish too much (I've not had this happen myself, but this is advice I received).

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## Marinated Herring

by  
Scott Schulkin

1 cup water  
½ cup coarse Kosher salt  
1 cup sugar  
1 ½ cup pickling vinegar  
2 cups water  
1 1/3 cup sugar  
1 tablespoon whole allspice  
1 teaspoon whole pepper  
½ teaspoon ground pepper  
1 teaspoon whole cloves  
4 onions  
1 leek

Wash filets and drain. Boil ingredients for brine and cool. Pour brine over filets for 2 days. Remove fish from brine, wash and drain. Mix ingredients for marinade, boil and cool. Put herring filets, sliced onion and leek into a crock pot or deep dish and pour cold marinade over. Fish may have to be weighted down to stay in marinade. Use a small plate and jar filled with water. Marinate for 3 days.

## **Dilled Herring**

by

Scott Schulkin

4 fillets of salt herring  
1 cup finely chopped onion  
4 tablespoons chopped dill

### Marinade

½ cup pickling vinegar  
2/3 cup water  
¾ cup sugar  
5 grains pepper

Soak fillets in water for about 8 hours. Boil vinegar, water, sugar and pepper and allow to cool. Cut fillets into ½ inch pieces. Layer herring, onion and dill in a wide mouthed jar. Cover the fish with marinade. Marinate in refrigerator for 1 day.

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## **Quick Pickled Herring**

by

Scott Schulkin

Drain the liquid from 1 ½ to 2 cups (or 2 jars each 6 to 8 oz.) of lightly seasoned prepared herring, such as marinated fat herring fillet pieces or wine flavored herring fillet pieces. Also peel and thinly slice 1 carrot and 1 small red onion. Alternate layers of herring, carrot, onion and 1 tsp of whole allspice (lightly crushed) in a glass jar or deep container (4 cup capacity) until all ingredients have been used. Mix Together ½ cup white vinegar, white wine vinegar or cider vinegar, 1 cup water, 2/3 cup sugar and pour over herring. Tuck one whole bay leaf into the jar. Cover and chill at least 4 hours or up to 4 days. Serve if desired with bread and butter. Makes about 3 cups.



**Cloudberry Sill**  
by  
Scott Schulkin

½ cup pickling vinegar  
2/3 cup water  
¾ cup sugar  
pepper

1 can drained baby herring for pickling  
1 leek  
¾ cup cloudberry  
2 star anise  
4 bay leaves  
2 teaspoons yellow mustard seeds  
10 allspice corns

Heat the vinegar, water and sugar, boil and cool. Rinse the herring filets and cut into 1 ½ inch pieces. Rinse and trim the leek and slice it thinly. Make alternate layers of herring and leek in a glass jar.

## Pickled Herring

by

Scott Schulkin

2 large salt herring  
1 whole allspice, crushed  
2 red onions, sliced  
½ carrot  
1 small piece horseradish  
few slices cucumber  
few sprigs of dill (if desired)  
½ cup vinegar  
½ cup water  
½ cup sugar

Clean herring, remove heads, rinse and let stand in cold water for about 12 hours. Combine vinegar, water, sugar and boil and cool. Remove herring from water and dry with paper towels. Slice herring. Peel and slice onion, carrots horseradish and pickle and place in a glass jar with sliced berries. Add dill (if desired) and allspice. Pour vinegar mixture over to cover. Let stand in a cool place for a few days.

Serves 8-12

## **Mustard Herring**

by  
Scott Schulkin

1 large or 3 small salt herring  
½ teaspoon prepared mustard  
1 tablespoon sugar  
1 tablespoon salad oil  
½ cup heavy cream  
5 tablespoons cooked beets, chopped  
2 tablespoons pickled cucumber slices  
2 hard cooked eggs, chopped

Clean herring and rinse, cover with cold water and let stand for 24 hours. Cut down the back and remove bones and skin. Cut into filets. Place in a serving dish. Mix mustard and sugar together, slowly add oil. Beat the cream stiff and add to mustard mixture. Add beets and cucumber. Pour the mustard sauce over the herring and arrange tiny cold baked potatoes around. Spread the chopped hard cooked eggs over the top of the herring.

6 serving

## Chicken Liver Pate

½ lb. chicken livers  
2 tablespoons butter  
2 hard cooked eggs  
2 packages (3 oz.) cream cheese  
dill weed or fresh dill  
2 teaspoon chopped fresh parsley  
Salt and pepper to taste  
1 tablespoon brandy

Sauté chicken livers in butter over medium heat for 10 minutes. Drain on a paper towel. Add the mixture to a food processor along with the eggs and process until smooth. Then add the cream cheese, salt, pepper, parsley dill, and brand and thoroughly blend. Serve on crackers or hard tack. Keep in the refrigerator and remove shortly before serving.

Yields 1 ½ cups

## SONGS TO GO WITH AKVAVIT

### Helan går

Helan Går,  
Sjung hopp, faderallan lallan lej.  
Helan går,  
Sjung hopp, faerallen lej.  
Och den som inte helan tar,  
Han heller inte halvan får!  
Sjung hopp, faderallan lej!

Phonetic transliteration:

Hal and Gore,  
Shun hop, father Alan Lalan ley  
Hal and Gore,  
Shun hop, father Alan ley.  
Oh handsome in the hell and tar  
An' Hal are in the half and four  
Hal and Gore!  
Shun hop, father Alan ley!

Translation:

Now for the first!  
Sing hop, faerallan lallan ley.  
Now for the first,  
Sing hop, faderallan ley.  
And those who won't the first one take  
They also number two forsake  
Now for the first  
Sing hop, faderallan ley!

## **Kräftan**

Kräfta, krätapydd med dill,  
Och en immig sup därtill  
Bröd och smör och ost och sill,  
Och så några supar till  
Kräfte, kräfte pydd med dill,  
Nu vi fått allt vad vi vill

## **Nubben**

Dom nubbarna, dom nubbarna,  
Är lustiga att ta.  
Dom Nubbarna, dom nubbarna,  
Dom vill vi gätns ha.  
Ej roar, ej röa, nej skala kräftan först  
Och sedan, och sedan, vi släcka ska vår töst

## Old Man Noah

Old man Noah, old man Noah,  
Was the man for me  
When the flood abated,  
Noah cultivated,  
Many a vineyard, many a vineyard,  
Planted 'em did he!

“What’s the reason? What’s the reason?”  
Noah knew full well  
Man, like other creatures,  
All have thirsty natures,  
Which is why he, which is why he  
Would our thirst dispel.

Mrs. Noah, Mrs. Noah,  
Was a kind old frau.  
Wine she poured him no end,  
Had I such a girlfriend,  
I would marry, I would marry  
Right this minute now



## **I like the Snaps**

I like the snaps  
The snaps likes me.  
Thrilling as only a snaps can be.  
I want to drink the real elite,  
Nyköpings Akvavit.

Over the mountains over the sea,  
Thousands of synapses are waiting for me  
Please go to hell with juice and tea.  
Snaps is the drink for me!

## Gubben Noak

Gubben Noak, Gubben Noak.  
Var en hedersman.  
När han gick ur arken  
Platera han på marken,  
Mycket vin, ja mycket vin,  
Ja detta gjorde han.

Han väl visste, han väl visste,  
Att en mänska var,  
Törstig av nature,  
Som de andra djuren;  
Därför ha nock, därför han ock,  
Vin planterat har.

Gumman Noak, gumman Noak,  
Var en hedersfru.  
Hon gav man sin dricka;  
Fick jag sådan flicka,  
Gifte jag mig, gifte jag mig,  
Strax på stunden nu



## Helan går

Helan Går,  
Sjung hopp, faderallan lallan lej.  
Helan går,  
Sjung hopp, faerallen lej.  
Och den som inte helan tar,  
Han heller inte halvan får!  
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