



From the East Kingdom Cooks Guild, *Field Research Division*

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Got Almond Milk?

A few months back, there was a discussion on the Bhakail-list group about Almond milk(s). In a time with no fridge, almond milk was a safe substitute of animal milk. Being of vegetal origin, it could also be incorporated in lent and other meatless days dishes. This probably explains why there are a lot of different recipes for Almond milk. Additionally, the modern cook will appreciate that some recipes are vegan and that almond milk can be offered to lactose-intolerant guests...Below are 2 French recipes.

- a) A sweet almond milk (*livre fort excellent de cuisine tres utile et profitable* ... édité chez olivier arnoulet- lyon 1542)

pour faire laict damandes ayes de belles amandes qui ayent este trempees ung jour et une nuit quelles se puissent plumer sans chauffer/ ce faict broyez les au mortier avecques la mye de pain blanc rostis et la detrempe de belle eaue boullue. Ce faict passes par lestamine et boutes en ung pot et faictes boullir et le passez et y boutes du sucre

Translation: To prepare almond milk take some nice almonds soaked one day and one night so that they can be skinned without needing heat/ grind them in a mortar with roasted breadcrumbs (without the crust) and boiled water. Filter through a cheesecloth and boil it, filter again and add sugar to taste.

- b) A salty or sweet almond milk (*le menagier de Paris* circa 1393)

pourboutez et pelez vos amandes, puis les mettez en eaue froide, puis les broyez et detrempez de l'eaue où les oignons auront cuit et coulez par une estamine : puis frisiaez les oignons, et mettez dedans un petit de sel, et faites boullir sur le feu, puis mettez les soupes. Et se vous faites lait d'amandes pour malades, n'y mettez aucuns oignons, et au lieu de l'eaue d'oignons pour detremper les amandes et dont dessus est parle, mettez-y et les detrempez d'eaue tiede nette et faites boullir, et n'y mettez point de sel mais sucre a foison. Et se vous en voulez faire pour boire si le coulez a l'estamine ou par deux toiles, et sucre a foison au boire

Translation: Boil and skin your almonds, and put them in cold water, then grind them and soak them in water in which onions have been cooked and drain through a cheesecloth: cook the onions (small fire), and add a little salt, and boil on the fire (higher intensity), then add the broth (drained previously). If you are doing the almond milk for sick people, don't put any onion and instead of the onion water described above, use clean warm water and boil, and don't add salt but plenty of sugar. And to drink it strain through a cheesecloth or 2 pieces of cloth, and add plenty of sugar to taste

Here is some additional information found in Stefan's Florilegium, comments are from Lady Aoife Finn of Ynos Mon: "*Almond milk is NOT a hassle to make unless you are making it in a period manner (ie: grinding by hand in a mortar and pestle, which is not too terribly onerous once you have the knack). Modern coffee grinders or blenders or food processors make short work of grinding almonds very fine while adding a quantity of cool water. You then strain out any lumps.*

Voila! Almond milk. Heat it slowly, and you get almond butter, once it's drained of it's liquid "whey"."

Personal comments: Almond milk is, in fact, easy to prepare. You grind almonds and collect, after heating, what is soluble in water or a broth of your choice. A simple filtration allows you to recover your preparation. The home-made almond milk does not really taste like the one you buy, the consistency is also different. You have to decide if it matters for you. However, here are 2 things that doing it yourself allows you to do:

- *the almond powder you recover can be mix with breadcrumbs, and milk, and a touch of sugar or honey, and warmed up, and eaten that way*
- *you can easily prepare the almond butter by evaporating the extra-liquid. It won't taste like commercial almond butter but if you add a touch of honey, and a drop of orange blossom water that give you a very unique sweet spread...*

For more information:

<http://www.godecookery.com/nboke/nboke57.htm>

<http://lemur.cit.cornell.edu/~jules/almond-milk-flans.html>

<http://www.florilegium.org/files/FOOD/almond-milk-msg.rtf>

Cindy Renfrow: Take a Thousand Eggs or More <http://www.thousandeggs.com/>