



Lord Thomas de Marr'

Powdered Hippocras

“To make powdered hippocras, take a quarter of very fine cinnamon selected by tasting it, and half a quarter of fine flour cinnamon, an ounce of selected string ginger, fine and white, and an ounce of grain of paradise, a sixth of nutmegs and galingale together, and bray them all together. And when you would make your hippocras, take a good half

ounce of this powder and two quarters of sugar and mix them with a quart of wine, by Paris measure. And note that the powder and the sugar mixed together is the Duke’s powder.” – “The Goodman of Paris” Translated by Eileen Powers, Folio Society 1992 Edition, pg 196

- 4 oz stick cinnamon
- 2 oz powdered cinnamon
- 2 2/3 oz of nutmeg & Galingale each
- 1 oz ginger
- 1 oz grain of paradise
- 8 oz / 1 cup sugar
- 2 quarts of Pinot Noir wine

This recipe appears to be a prep cook receipt rather than a complete step by step instruction to make the hippocras. My reasoning is that the quantities used here make enough for many 2 quart batches of wine and it seems unlikely the unused spiced would be thrown out after the first batch, it’s an expensive waste both today and in 1393 Paris. Secondly the recipe says, *“And when you would make your hippocras,”* as if it were a separate process being instigated, only mentioned because the author wants us to know about adding the sugar to the spice at that point in time. I did this recipe both ways, as strictly written, and as hypothesized with the process of making hippocras commonly used. Presented here is the hippocras made using standard practices of the times.



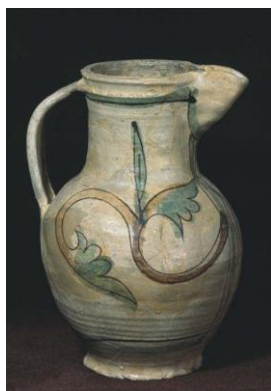
Tools - I used period appropriate tools throughout this process as much as possible. The spices were wrapped in a linen cloth and smashed with a hammer, then ground by hand with my mortar and pestle since I don’t have a quarn (grindstone). Ceramic bowls were used for all my spices with a metal mixing bowl for the braying of the spices. Wooden spoon, clay pot over the fire on a trivet for boiling. The hippocras bag was made of linen, and I wore my 14th century garb while making this brew. I

did use a modern food scale and measuring cup for the wine.

Ingredients – for the cinnamon sticks I used modern ones from the store as that is all I had available in the quantities involved with this recipe. The nutmeg was 1 oz of whole nutmeg and the

rest in powdered form due to available quantities. I stayed away from pre-ground spices as much as possible for the authenticity of process and ingredients. I used whole ginger that I grated as fine as I could into the mixture. The recipe did not say to use a powdered form, so I used fresh. For the wine I chose Pinot Noir. In 1395 the Duke of Burgundy Phillip the Bold put out an edict that all Gamay vines were to be removed and only Pinot Noir planted in its place. He did this because Pinot Noir was much more popular, and he felt that the Gamay wines were inferior and giving Burgundy a bad wine reputation. This shows that Pinot Noir was a popular choice to make in that time and region. I was unable to locally source Grenache wine which would have been another alternative as it is mentioned several times throughout *"The Goodman of Paris"* as a cooking ingredient. The mention of *"of by Paris measure"* is important as 1 quart by Paris measure comes out to 2 quarts by modern measure. Every online search I ran on this came back the same from multiple sources without any deviation, so I am pretty confident in this interpretation.

Process – I ground the spices by first wrapping them in a linen cloth, smashing them with a hammer and then grinding them with a mortar and pestle. The ginger was grated into the mixing bowl directly. This was the most labor intensive and time-consuming part. I tied the linen hippocras bag over the ceramic bowl and set the spices and sugar together in the bag. The wine was brought to a boil in the clay pot on a trivet over the fire which only took about 3 minutes and started to boil over. When I removed the lid, the wine ignited so I quickly removed the pot from the fire and snuffed out the wine with the lid again. Taking the boiling wine I slowly strained it through the bag of spices to let it dissolve the sugar and take on the flavor of the spices. This I did twice without adding more sugar. (See appendix A) Once it cooled to room temperature, I poured it into clay jug for storage until it was time to serve. I also did this recipe as a strict interpretation where the spices are just mixed with sugar and thrown into the wine, no straining or heating of the wine. This produced a heavier mouth feel and potent spices although not unpleasant. The heated and strained version being presented here is lighter in the mouth due to the sugars fully dissolving and the spice are light on the tongue since they did not steep in the wine for any amount of time. I am still convinced that this process is how the recipe was intended to be used, as a prep cook instruction for making hippocras.



Serving Container - The example illustrated here was found in a midden at Kidwelly Castle (Carmarthenshire) during excavations in the 1930s. It appeared to have been thrown away along with several plainer vessels and is decorated with a vine scroll motif typical of Saintonge (French Potter) jugs. It was probably produced between 1275 and 1320. This elegantly decorated vessel illustrates the great skill of the Saintonge potters. It is 25cm (9.8 inches) tall and in places its walls are only 2.4mm (0.1 inches) thick. – Museum of Wales Collection

Appendix

A. I chose the method of straining the wine through a cloth as a way to control how spiced the wine would be. While the cited source for this method is in fact 120 years after the Goodman recipe it is the first one, I found that says to use the spices as a powder before using. There are probably earlier such sources, but this was the one I found which I could cite reliably. The recipes are from the edition of *Een notabel boecxken van cokeryen* (1514 printed by Thomas vander Noot in Brussels) from 1994.

Om te maken finen rooden clareyt (f. 27v)

Neempt vlemsschen zeem een pinte ende een half pinte waters. Dit siedet over een ende schuymet wel. Alst wel gheschuymt es soe doeghet van den viere. Dan neemt eenen stoop rooden wijn dyen minghelt metten voerseiden ghescuymden zeeme. Dan neemt onderhalf once tornisol dat syedet in een luttel wijns met water te gader. Dit minghelt daer in. Hebdi gheen rooden wijn ghi sult nemen petau oft rinsschen wijn ende sieden daer so veel te meer tornysols inne maer wijn bastaert waer alder best. Oock suldi weten const men ghevinden eenighe tenture dat beter ware dan eenighen wijn diemen vinden mach. Dit es dat poedere: Neempt een onche caneels/ een once witten gimbere/ groffels naghelen/ greyne/ elcx twee dragina, notenmuscaten/ galigaen/ elcx een dragina, lanck peper een dragina. Hieraf maket pulver ende latet dan al lopen doer den sack acht oft neghen werven tot dat claer es. Maer dect den sac boven datter geen locht uut en gha.

To make fine red claret.

Take a pint Flemish honey and a half pint water. Boil together and skim well. When it has been skimmed, take it off the fire. Then take a stoop (about 4 pints) red wine. Temper with the forementioned skimmed honey. Then take one and a half ounce [turnsole](#) and boil this in a little wine with water. Add this [to the red wine]. If you do not have red wine, take Poitou wine or Rhine wine and use more turnsole. But Bastard wine (sweet white wine) is the best. Also you should know that if one can find some Tenture (Spanish red wine), this would be better than any other wine. This is the spice mixture: take an ounce cinnamon, an ounce ginger, cloves, grains of paradise, two drachma of each, nutmeg, galingale, one drachma each, long pepper, one drachma. **Make a powder of these [spices] and then run the wine through a sack eight or nine times until it is clear. But cover the sack to prevent air coming out.**