

DOMENICA COOKS

HOMEMADE VOV

(Zabaglione Cream Liqueur)

This creamy liqueur (sort of an Italian version of eggnog) has a charming back-story, one of typical Italian resourcefulness. In 1845, Gian Battista Pezziol, a pastry chef in Padova, faced a daily dilemma: how to use up hundreds of egg yolks left over from making torrone, Italy's famous nut-studded nougat. He hit on a liqueur based on zabaglione, a spoon dessert made from yolks, sugar and Marsala. He named it "Vovi"—Venetian dialect for eggs. The popularity of Vov has waxed and waned over the many decades since its creation, but in recent years it's come back into vogue as a key ingredient in winter cocktails such as the "bombardino" ("little bomb" ~ see below for more on that).

From *"Preserving Italy: Canning, Curing, Infusing, and Bottling Italian Flavors and Traditions."*

INGREDIENTS

1 cup whole milk
1 cup heavy cream
2 cups sugar, divided
1/2 vanilla bean
4 large egg yolks
1/2 cup dry Marsala
1/2 cup grain alcohol, such as EverClear
1/4 cup Cognac

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Pour the milk and cream into a saucepan and stir in 1 cup sugar. Scrape the seeds from the vanilla bean into the saucepan. Bring the milk and cream to a bare simmer over medium heat, without letting it boil. Stir to make sure the sugar dissolves completely. Remove from the heat.
2. Whisk together the egg yolks and remaining sugar until thick and light in color. Add a few dribbles of the scalded milk and cream to the egg yolks, whisking vigorously to prevent the yolks from curdling. Continue to whisk in the milk and cream, a little at a time, until you have added it all. Gently whisk in the Marsala, alcohol and Cognac.

3. Pour the liqueur through a funnel into clean bottles. Refrigerate until thoroughly chilled. The liqueur is ready to drink once it's cold. It will last for a month in the refrigerator. Shake well before serving.

NOTE: Vov is used as a base for several Italian cocktails, including a couple that are popular with the Alpine ski set. These recipes are from the Vov website. You can use your homemade egg liqueur:

Bombardino: Heat 1 ounce of Vov until warm. Pour into a glass and add a splash of rum. Top with whipped cream.

Calimero: Heat 1 ounce of Vov until warm. Pour into a mug and add 1 shot freshly brewed espresso. Top with whipped cream and a sprinkle of cocoa powder.