



## Great Greek Lion Libation

By Dylan Sabuco

**Prep Time 5 / Cook Time 5 / Serves 4 - 6**

## Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

**measure:** to calculate the specific amount of an ingredient required using a measuring tool (like measuring cups or spoons).

**pour:** to cause liquid, granules, or powder to stream from one container into another.

**simmer:** to cook a food gently, usually in a liquid, until softened.

## Equipment

- ☐ Medium saucepan
- ☐ Pitcher
- ☐ Liquid measuring cup
- ☐ Dry measuring cups
- ☐ Measuring spoons
- ☐ Wooden spoon
- ☐ Strainer

## Ingredients

### Great Greek Lion Libation

- ☐ 1 C water
- ☐ 1/4 C sugar
- ☐ 1 tsp anise seed OR 2 whole star anise
- ☐ 3 C white grape juice

❑ ice

## Food Allergen Substitutions

Great Greek Lion Libation

### Instructions

Great Greek Lion Libation

measure + boil

Measure **1 cup water**, **1/4 cup sugar**, and **1 teaspoon anise seed OR 2 whole star anise** in a medium saucepan. Then, bring the mixture to a boil to create the anise-flavored simple syrup to flavor the drink. While it boils, go to the next step.

add + stir

Measure **3 cups white grape juice** and pour into a pitcher. Then, return to the simple syrup. After 5 minutes of the syrup boiling, remove it from the heat and cool for 5 minutes. Then, place a strainer over the pitcher and pour the syrup through the strainer. Stir to combine the two liquids.

measure + pour

Add **1 cup ice** to each cup. Then, pour the drink into each cup. Say a big “Stin ygeiá mas” (Stin ee-YAH mahs) or "Cheers" (literally, "to our health") in Greek!

### Featured Ingredient: Anise and Star Anise!

Hi! We're Anise and Star Anise!

"We're different plants from different families, but we both have a licorice-like flavor, and you can use either of us in recipes!"

History & Etymology

Anise or aniseed (*Pimpinella anisum*) is native to the eastern Mediterranean region and Southwest Asia. It was first cultivated in Egypt and the Middle East and has been grown in Egypt for 4,000 years.

Ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans used anise in cooking and medicinally. They felt it aided digestion, relieved headaches, and treated infections.

From Persia, anise went to India and arrived in China about 1200 CE. It eventually arrived in Europe, and English settlers brought it to Colonial America.

India produces the most aniseed in the world.

Anise provides food for butterfly and moth larvae.

The word "anise" is Middle English via Old French, from the Latin "anisum," from the Greek "anison."

Star anise (*Illicium verum*) is native to the regions of South China and northeast Vietnam. It is also called badian, Chinese star anise, and star of anise.

Star anise has been used medicinally and as a spice in China and Vietnam for over 3,000 years. It is used as an expectorant to treat coughs, a stimulant, and a digestive aid.

Star anise is generally less expensive than aniseed due to production costs.

China is the largest producer of star anise in the world, followed by Vietnam.

The inedible Japanese star anise is a different species (*Illicium anisatum*), and its seeds are highly toxic.

Another similar tree, swamp star anise (*Illicium parviflorum*), found in the southern United States, is also highly toxic and inedible.

## Anatomy

Anise (*Pimpinella anisum*) is a flowering plant from the aromatic Apiaceae or Umbelliferae family. Caraway, carrot, celery, cumin, dill, and parsley are from the same family.

The herbaceous plant grows to 2 to 3 feet tall. It has clustered green leaves, and its tiny flowers (1/8 inch in diameter) grow in umbrella-like clusters. The fruit, or aniseed, is dry, oblong, and slightly curved, and is 1/6 to 1/4 inch long.

The star anise (*Illicium verum*) is a medium-sized evergreen tree from the Schisandraceae or star-vine family. It may be a large shrub or a small tree that grows to 10 to 15 feet tall. Its glossy green leaves are fragrant, especially when crushed. Flowers are pink to dark red.

The fruit starts out green and then turns brown. There are six to eight follicles or arms in each seed pod, and each arm has one pea-sized seed.

A compound in star anise, "shikimic acid," is used in the production of the antiviral medication Oseltamivir (Tamiflu).

Star anise and aniseed have similar aromas and flavors because they both contain the organic compound "anethole" (or anise camphor).

## How to Pick, Buy & Eat

Anise is ready to be harvested 100 to 130 days from planting, and the flower heads become dry and turn brown. The flower heads are cut off the plant, and the seeds are separated.

Anise is considered an herb and a spice. Crushed or ground seeds have a stronger flavor than whole seeds and provide a smoother texture. Toasting whole seeds intensifies their flavor and makes them easier to crush or grind.

Anise may be used to flavor herbal teas, various liqueurs, and other drinks. It is used to flavor cakes, cookies, and candy, like black (licorice-flavored) jelly beans.

German "Pfeffernüsse" cookies are flavored with anise and other spices. Mexican "champurrado" is a hot chocolate-like drink that may include anise. Italian pepperoni and sausage have anise. Anise helps flavor

New Mexican "bizcochito" cookies.

Aniseed can also be added to braised meats and vegetables, breads, sauces, soup, and stews.

Star anise is harvested about two to four weeks after flowers have bloomed, when the green fruit becomes brown and firm, but before it fully splits open, so its seeds do not fall out. The pods are often picked early and dried when they are still green, as they will ripen indoors.

The pod with seeds can be ground to use as a spice. The ground spice should be stored in a cool, dark place in an airtight container. Or, the whole pod can be used to flavor a dish and then removed before eating, similar to vanilla bean pods.

Star anise has a licorice-like flavor and is similar in taste to aniseed. It is one of the spices used in Chinese five-spice powder and garam masala, and a spice blend from the Indian subcontinent.

Star anise is used in "biryani" (South Asian rice and meat dish), Vietnamese "phở" (rice noodle soup), and "masala chai" (Indian spiced black tea drink).

Whole star anise can be added to broths and to the blanching, braising, or poaching liquid for fish, meats, or vegetables.

The spice can be added to desserts, such as cakes, cookies, and pickled or poached fruit. It can also be added to hot beverages, like hot fruit punches and mulled wine.

## Nutrition

Anise contains a small amount of minerals. Studies indicate it has some antidepressant properties. It may help to reduce stomach acid and help prevent ulcers.

Anethole, the compound that provides the flavor in both anise and star anise, has antifungal and antimicrobial properties that protect against bacterial and fungal infections.

The shikimic acid in star anise is used to treat viral infections, like influenza. Linalool, an aroma compound in star anise, also has antifungal and antimicrobial properties.