

Photo credit to Heami Lee

Jujube Ginseng Negroni

BY IRENE YOO | @YOOEATING

Dried jujubes, also known as red dates or Chinese dates, feel like a cornerstone of Korean culture for me. When I was a kid, sliced rounds adorned the creamy white slabs of steamed dduk (rice cakes) that my halmeoni would buy from the local rice-cake shop (I always picked them off). When I got married, our parents tossed handfuls into my hanbok skirt to predict the number of children we might have (22?). And every Chuseok (the harvest holiday colloquially known as Korean Thanksgiving) I mound a tall pile of jujubes as one of the table centerpieces, crawling under the table to retrieve any runaways.

Jujubes are used as a base flavor in so many core Korean foods. They can be steeped in tea, infused into rich stews like samgyetang, and even dropped into the salt brine when making traditional doenjang and ganjang. So infusing this rich red dried fruit into soju gives you a drink that feels nostalgically Korean and tastes like a nutty sherry. The longer the infusion sits, the more syrupy and sweet the liquor becomes. Drink it on its own or in the Negroni.

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SERVES: 1

INGREDIENTS

2 ounces Jujube Ju (see instructions)
½ ounce Campari
½ ounce sweet vermouth
¼ ounce honey jujube tea (see Notes)
1 (3 g) packet ginseng tea powder (see Notes)
Handful of uncooked white rice
Ice
Orange peel, for garnish

Jujube Ju

¼ cup dried jujubes
1 (375 ml) bottle soju (20% ABV)

Notes

The honey jujube used here comes in a jar and looks like jam or preserves. It's not a bagged, dried, or powdered tea.

Ginseng tea powder is sold in most Asian grocery stores or online, and comes in individual serving packets meant to be mixed with hot water.

INSTRUCTIONS

01 For Jujube Ju

1. Cut the jujubes in half to expose the insides.
2. Combine with the soju in an airtight container and infuse for at least 1 day before using. You can infuse for longer if you'd like–the liquor will get sweeter with time.

02 For Jujube Ginseng Negroni

In a cocktail shaker, combine the jujube-infused soju, Campari, sweet vermouth, honey jujube tea, ginseng tea powder, and uncooked rice. Add ice and shake vigorously until well chilled and frothy. Fine-strain into a rocks glass with one large ice cube. Squeeze the orange peel over the glass to express the oils, then rub the peel along the inside rim of the glass and discard.