

# Homemade Vanilla & other extracts

## small 8 oz. & large 750 mL big bottle recipes

by Suzanne McMinn • The Farmhouse Table • Extras, Homemade Mixes  
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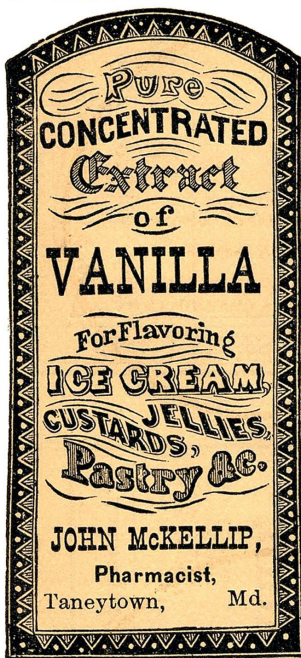
Since I started making my own vanilla in the past year, I never use anything else. I love it! How many things can you do that are easy and involve alcohol without ending up in jail? (Don't answer that!)

In my original post about making vanilla, I demonstrated the recipe for one small bottle. If you don't use much vanilla regularly, this works fine.



### Instructions

- Thoroughly clean or sterilize a clear glass bottle.
- Split the vanilla beans in half lengthwise to exposure the beans.
- The vanilla beans need to be fully submerged in the alcohol to ensure all the flavor is extracted.
- Add the vodka to the bottle or jar and use a funnel if needed.
- Although this is a set it and forget it type of process; for best results you should make a habit of shaking the bottle at least once a week.
- Allow the vanilla extract to sit in a cool dark place for a minimum of 8 weeks until the vodka changes to a golden brown color.



### Other Extracts made with / 8 oz. Vodka:

- Vanilla Extract: 4 whole vanilla bean pods (3-4")
- Almond Extract: ½ cup raw unsalted slivered almonds
- Lemon Extract: 2 lemon rinds, peeled into strips
- Orange Extract: 1 large orange rind, peeled into strips
- Mint Extract: 1 cup loosely packed fresh mint leaves

But if you do a lot of baking (like I do), more is better—and especially if you are making it for gifts. I now make vanilla by the 750 ml bottle. In one fell swoop, you can make a large quantity of vanilla, and since the entire bottle steeps longer with more vanilla beans, the end result is a stronger extract.

In this recipe, I'm making a big batch, using a 750 milliliter bottle of vodka (750 ml is just over 3 cups, so I'm multiplying the original recipe by roughly 12).

## EXTRA-LARGE VANILLA RECIPE:



750 ml bottle of vodka  
12 whole vanilla beans  
dark rum or bourbon (optional)

Using kitchen scissors, cut vanilla beans in half lengthwise, leaving about an inch connected (not cut) at one end.

Now simply push the beans into the bottle. The beans are going to displace some of the vodka. This is not a problem! Get some orange juice and drink it! (I'm just kidding! Maybe.)

Screw lid on tightly and store in a cool, dry location. Shake the bottle once or twice a day at first, then just whenever you think about it. It will take a month or two to steep good, but you can use it sooner if you're in a rush. Stored properly, it will be good for years, and in fact, get better all the time as it grows stronger.

Use a small funnel to transfer the extract to smaller bottles.

I like the extra kick of dark rum in my vanilla extract, so when I poured the first small bottle out, I added rum to the big bottle, using a funnel. The first few times you

take out from the big bottle, it doesn't hurt to add some extra rum or vodka to stretch your vanilla beans—if you let it steep again, it will be just as strong.

Tie raffia or ribbons around small bottles to give as Christmas gifts. Add a handmade or home-printed label. Or, if an avid baker is on your list, they'd love an entire big bottle, and be sure to make one for yourself!

Vanilla Conversions in Recipes: If you need to swap one vanilla flavoring for another, usually  $\frac{1}{2}$  - 1 vanilla bean will approx equal  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract or 1 teaspoon vanilla bean paste. One vanilla bean can equal from 1 to 3 teaspoons of vanilla extract, depending on the size of bean and brand of vanilla extract. Because there is no universal control over how vanilla extract is produced, some brands are stronger than others. Vanilla beans range considerably in size and potency. Tahitian beans are some of the largest and strongest. If stored correctly, vanilla beans can last anywhere from six months to three years without losing potency. While perfectly safe and usable, the quality in aroma, flavor and supple texture may diminish after a year.

<https://morningchores.com/growing-vanilla/>

Vanilla grows in Hardiness Zones 10 and 11.