

Sekanjabin - 10th Century, Persia

Sekanjabin is arguably the great granddaddy of all modern day soft drinks, known in some circles as medieval Gatorade. So, what is it? It was originally used as a medicine to help aid in digestion. These days it is a refreshing syrup that is primarily made from water, some sort of sugar (traditionally honey), and vinegar. It can be flavored with a number of different ingredients, usually herbs or fruits.

When making it, we actually create a syrup which is relatively shelf stable, less so when fruit is added. The syrup itself can be served in the summer with lettuce to dip in it as a refreshing appetizer. As a beverage, the syrup is added to water and served as a drink known as *sharbat-e sekanjabin*.

Recipes

Simple Sekanjabin

2 c. water
3 c honey or sugar
1 c vinegar

1. Add honey or sugar and water to the saucepan, then bring to a boil.
2. Reduce to a simmer and allow to cook down for a few minutes.
3. Add vinegar and simmer for another minute, and then let cool to room temperature.

Mint Sekanjabin

2 c. water
3 c honey or sugar
1 c vinegar
1 bunch mint sprigs, washed

1. Add honey or sugar and water to the saucepan, then bring to a boil.
2. Reduce to a simmer and allow to cook down for a few minutes.
3. Add vinegar and simmer for another minute, and remove from heat.
4. Let mint steep for half an hour and remove.

To serve as a refreshing drink, mix 1 part syrup to 8 to 10 parts water (or to your preference).