



## Fondant.com 2018 Advent Calendar

### Day 3



### "Instant" Vanilla Extract

I came up with this by accident.

I was "overnighting" at one of my shops on Christmas Eve. The next day, 300 customers would be coming in shifts to pick up their orders for their Christmas celebrations.

My gallon jug of Vanilla Extract I had opened one week prior was out.

At that point, my tiny commercial/retail bakeshop was pumping out cookies for nationwide Neiman-Marcus locations, all the Bloomingdale's stores, Nordstrom kiosks, 14 local Gloria Jean's Coffee Bean stores, and 110 Starbucks Midwest locations. Having one gallon in reserve was cutting it a bit close but I figured it wouldn't be a problem.

As I opened the new gallon, I noticed the seal was either tampered with or broken. I poured a bit into my measuring cup and it was cloudy. BAD SIGN!!! It gave off a funky smell, not at all like the wonderful aroma ladies in Victorian times used to dab behind their ears. No way was that cloudy, smelly vanilla going in my 40 pound batch of cookie dough. Who knew Vanilla Extract could go bad!?

I had a bag of Mexican Vanilla beans (my favorite kind for baking) in my freezer. I tried to think of the best way to get some flavor out of them QUICK! It hit me after a few minutes. Tea. Tea was an extract, too, after all.

I poured 2 cups of hot water from my coffee maker into my 4 cup glass Pyrex measuring cup, sliced 10 vanilla beans lengthwise, then again crosswise and threw them in the hot water. I gave it a swish. I always had Cognac at the shop and added it to the 2 cups of Vanilla "tea" to make 4 cups total.

One hour and a lot of stirring later, I had a pretty close rendition of a vanilla that normally takes me 2 months to brew.

©copyright 1995-2011 Patricia Holmes, fondant.com/Spirit Bear Co. all rights reserved. 2018