

Philadelphia Fish House Punch

The iconic Philadelphia Fish house punch is believed to have come from the oldest angling club in the United States named the “Colony in Schuylkill.” Initially located in Fairmount, Pennsylvania, the club opened a clubhouse at the foot of the Schuylkill River Falls (The Club eventually changed its name to the Schuylkill Fishing Company and has moved several times since its founding and is now located in Andalusia, Pennsylvania). Playing a pivotal role in the revolutionary war, the governing members of the Colony of Schuylkill helped form the First Troop Philadelphia City Cavalry. The First Troop Philadelphia City Cavalry is still the oldest active and most decorated unit in the US Army today. George Washington & the Marquis de Lafayette often stopped at the clubhouse during the war, where they became honorary members. The Club would hold gatherings for military victories and, to celebrate, would mix up a special punch it served from their baptism bowl. These celebrations are the birthplace of the Philadelphia Fish House Punch.

The famed fish house punch did not stay in the clubhouse long and quickly became a well-known American punch. The oldest printed recipe for this cocktail is in the 1862 Bartender’s Guide by Jerry Thomas.

- 1/3 Pint of lemon juice
- 3/4 pound of white sugar
- 1/3 pint of peach brandy
- 1/3 pint of cognac brandy
- 1/3 pint of Jamaican rum
- 2 1/2 pints of cold water

Here is the punch recipe updated to use more convenient units. The single-serve recipe is below.

- 3/4 cup of lemon juice
- 1 1/2 cups (1/2 bottle) of simple syrup
- 3/4 cup of peach brandy
- 3/4 cup of cognac brandy
- 3/4 cup of Jamaican rum
- 6 1/3 cups (2 bottles) of cold water

A pint is the equivalent volume of a pound of water, so it’s good enough to use pound and pint interchangeably. Even the Mount Vernon historical estate recognizes this as the correct recipe, and I’m confident they know what they are talking about. But not all recipes use water. Some use black tea. The black tea recipes taste great and add a nice earthiness to it, but water is the original ingredient.

Peach Liqueur Is Not Peach Brandy.

Another ingredient that can cause an issue is peach brandy. Brandy is a catch-all name for any spirit distilled from fruit. However, the word brandy is synonymous with specifically grape brandy distilled from grape wine; any fruit wine can be distilled into brandy. To differentiate the

other fruits, it specified which fruit, so apple brandy is from apple wine or pear brandy from pear wine, peach from peach wine, etc. And these other fruit brandies are typically dry, 80-proof, un-aged spirits.

The problem is peach liqueurs, and peach schnapps will be marketed and sold as peach brandy when they are entirely different from real peach brandy. Again, real peach brandy is dry and strong, almost like a peachy white rum. Real peach brandy is nearly impossible to find, making the issue worse in stores. I've only ever seen dry peach brandy as small craft distilleries in house stores. Christian Bros Peach Brandy is the closest I've found in most liquor stores. It's pretty good. It's brandy infused with peach flavors, but it's pretty dry, 35% ABV, and the closest you will get taste-wise to an absolute peach brandy. That being said I really like this made with peach schnapps.

Source: <https://vintageamericancocktails.com/philadelphia-fish-house-punch-recipe/>