

Coconut Telegraph

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Deadline

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Editorial - I'm not germophobic but....

My mother died from the flu. She was in her 70s and had other health conditions but it was the flu that killed her.

In the past I have been the brunt of jokes because I do not like to be kissed by acquaintances. Every year the snow birds come to the Keys and bring their northern germs with them and they run around kissing everyone hello. Its really not necessary when a simple "Hello, nice to see you" and a genuine smile will work just fine. Now that we have the threat of the coronavirus everywhere it is time to take a step back and think before we touch others. Last week I ran into a friend that thanked me for printing her brothers memorial photo. She laid a big hug on me and without thinking I wrapped my arms around her and hugged her back. That is when I realized I couldn't even trust myself! As this is written Tuesday March 24th I am under self imposed house arrest and only venture out for necessities.

The older you are the harder it is to shake off sickness. Kick back and order food delivery to your home or pick it up at local restaurants advertised in this issue. They are true heroes! Pamper yourself.

One thing that has helped me for many years is a natu-

ral anti-biotic that you can get at Betty's Health Food Store 103200 Overseas Highway in Key Largo. It is Grapefruit Seed Extract made by NutriBiotic in the pill form. I use it religiously when I feel something coming on. Some people on certain medications cannot take it so be sure to ask your doctor. While you are at Betty's see what else they recommend.

Wash your hands please! If you can't use a hand sanitizer. Lately the stuff is flying off the shelves so I decided to make my own. Here is my recipe:

How to make hand sanitizer
The ingredients:

1. 2/3 cup rubbing alcohol.
2. 1/3 cup aloe vera gel.

I would like to thank Dr. John Norris of Key West for his tireless and nonthreatening efforts to keep the Keys informed via Facebook, The American Legion (Maggie McKeenan, Chris Squier and Jan Gould) for giving out free meals to out of work folks, and thank all the employees of essential businesses for serving the community.

A group of people decided to stand in the road at MM 106 near the Key Largo Chamber of Commerce and protest with signs directed at incoming traffic to protest incoming tourist traffic on US 1 after they already



Denise Dowling. Photo by Betsy Baste.

knew the county had announced they were closing the Keys to non-residents so there really was no point. So many of us work hard to welcome visitors and make the Keys a beautiful place to visit. Those sign holders got to see themselves on TV but were a huge embarrassment to the rest of us. Then some wonderful people, Denise Downing and Betsy Baste held signs by the side of the road in Tavernier thanking



Please Note: This issue went to press on Mar. 26. Check with our advertisers before assuming the info in their ads hasn't changed!



our visitors and wishing them a safe trip. Now That is true Keys spirit!

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How to make Prison Wine at Home with thanks to Brokelyn.com

Here's a new skill you can use right now: making some good old, 25-to-life, brewed-in-a-bag prison wine.

Brewing at home usually requires a pricey set-up and lots of time. Prison wine, or "pruno" does not. The stuff's been made since the dawn of law enforcement and comes from the even older tradition of home brewing. Pruno can be made from almost anything, but it relies on the simple brewing principle that sugar + yeast + time = alcohol.

Traditionally, oranges and grapes are the preferred sugar in the equation, and moldy bread is the yeast (given that yeast packets probably aren't sold at the prison commissary). But we'd rather not poison anyone with home-made botulism, so we'll use the store-bought stuff, since we can still go out and shop.

Also, since the genuine issue pruno generally is brewed on the down low, conditions are far from sanitary. We've added a few steps to replace just dumping everything into a trash bag and letting it molder under the bed. So, follow our advice, use the recipe below, and you'll be enjoying isolation much more.

Ingredients

- 10-12 oranges (or any other sweet items you have, like grape jelly or cake frosting)
- 1 large can of fruit cocktail (for a nice finishing flavor)
- 1 packet of dried yeast
- 3 cups of sugar
- 1 one-gallon plastic bag with strong seal

Steps

Peel all of the oranges and put the fruit in the plastic bag. Add the can of fruit cocktail and squeeze out all of the excess air while securely closing the bag. Now



mash up the fruit inside by squeezing the bag. This is the most labor-intensive part, and if you're not careful, you'll pop open the bag and have a sticky mess.

Once all the fruit is completely mashed up, add the sugar and mix well.

Sterilize the fruit mash: put the bag of mash in a small pot and fill it with cold water so that most of the bag is covered. Next, place that pot in a larger pot of water and place it on the stove. The extra pot is needed to keep the bag from melting to the bottom. For all of you bakers out there, we're essentially double-boiling.

Bring the pot to a boil over high heat. Then reduce the heat to medium and boil for 20 to 30 minutes: long enough to kill the bacteria that would ruin the batch later on. After the bag has been sterilized, you'll need to cool it down. You can dunk it in an ice bath or chuck it in the freezer for a half-hour. Make sure to cool the mash down to room temperature before moving to the next step.

The Magic Begins

To start a beautiful chemical reaction that will turn our sugary pulp into a high-octane alcoholic beverage, we add yeast, a microbe whose sole purpose is to eat sugar and create ethanol. Most yeast needs to be "proofed," that is, the yeast needs to be awakened. To do this,

fill a small bowl or cup with warm water and add a few teaspoons of sugar. Add the contents of the yeast packet and wait. After a few minutes the mixture will start bubbling—this is the sign of a healthy batch of yeast. Once the mixture is frothy, it's ready to be added to the mash.

Carefully pour the yeasty water into the bag of fruit, seal the bag and mix it up. You did remember to cool it down, right? Otherwise, the temperature will kill our little alcohol-producing friends.

The Waiting Game

Within an hour, the bag should start expanding. That's the yeast feasting on the sugars inside, creating alcohol and carbon dioxide as a by-product. You'll need to tend to your bag in the first twelve hours by opening a small portion of the seal and releasing the carbon dioxide as it builds up. If you don't pay attention, the bag will pop and you'll have one terrible mess. Store the bag in a cool, dry, dark place.



To keep the bag from tipping over, place it in a large bowl. After a couple of days you'll notice your batch is inflating less and less, which means the carbon dioxide production is decreasing. The yeast is running out of sugar and slowing down. Periodically mix up the bag to spread the yeast throughout. After about five days you'll notice that essentially all reaction stops, with little or no car-

bon dioxide being produced. What we have left is a gallon bag of fruit mash and if you're lucky, tons of alcohol.

The Final Steps

The last thing we have to do is separate our fruit from our booze. Pour the bag through a colander and collect the liquid in a bowl. Get a large spoon and squeeze the mash to release as much liquid as possible. Throw out the mash.

What's left in the bowl is your prison/quarantine wine. It's ready to drink (in theory) but it'll smell and taste pretty strange. To make it more palatable, pour it into a pitcher and let it sit in the fridge overnight. After the remaining yeast in the mixture sinks to the bottom, pour off the liquid into another container and throw out the yeast (or drink it; it's very nutritious). The final result will be something akin to a very poorly mixed screwdriver. Toss in some ice and enjoy while you reflect on all the poor life choices that got you to this point.

Things to Do When There's "Nothing" To Do:

submitted by Melanie

- Coloring
- Gardening (it's spring!)
- Spring cleaning
- Painting
- Reading
- Binge watching /streaming
- Baking
- Preparing frozen meals
- Long walks
- Calling your friends
- Online window shopping
- Organize hurricane supplies
- Swimming
- Scavenger hunts
- Crafts
- Knitting/crocheting
- Honey-do list
- Clean out refrigerator
- Tidy landscaping
- Clean car

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