Drinks / Mexico

# Agua de Tamarindo

The most complex of the aguas frescas — tamarind pods cracked open to reveal their sticky, dark pulp, which is dissolved in hot water and coaxed into a dark amber drink that is profoundly sour, faintly sweet, and loaded with a fruity depth that is halfway between ripe date and tart apricot.

**Time** 20 min **Servings** 4

## What you'll need.

- ☐ 200 g Tamarind pods (fresh) or seedless block
- ☐ 1000 ml Cold water (to dilute)
- ☐ 1 pinch Pinch of fine sea salt
- ☐ 500 ml Boiling water (for dissolving pulp)
- ☐ 100 g White sugar

## Let's make it.

**01** If using fresh pods, crack the hard brittle shells and peel them away, pulling off the dark stringy fibres that run lengthwise down the pod. The sticky, chestnut-coloured pulp inside should feel soft and dense. If using a seedless block, simply break it into rough chunks. Place the pulp in a heatproof bowl and pour the boiling water over it. Let it sit for 10 minutes, pressing and massaging the pulp with a fork or your fingers every few minutes — you will feel it loosen and dissolve into the water progressively. The liquid will turn a deep amber-brown.

**02** Set a fine-mesh sieve over a large jug. Pour the tamarind water and pulp into the sieve and press firmly with the back of a large spoon, working in circular motions. The dark amber liquid will pass through while the fibres, seeds, and seed skins remain behind. Keep pressing until the residue in the sieve is nearly dry and fibrous. Discard the solids. The resulting concentrate should be a thick, dark amber liquid with a consistency slightly thicker than water — intensely sour and complex.

**03** Stir the sugar into the warm concentrate until completely dissolved, then add the pinch of salt. Pour in the cold diluting water gradually, tasting as you go — tamarind is assertive and the balance between sour, sweet, and salty is what defines the drink. The final agua should taste powerfully of tamarind fruit first, with the sweetness arriving second and the salt as a distant back note that makes the sourness pop. Refrigerate until cold. Stir before each pour as fine sediment will settle. Serve over ice.

**Recipe & provenance** ForkRecipe Kitchen / ForkRecipe / FoodML and contributors / CC BY-SA 4.0.
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Servings are an estimate; check quantities in the source recipe.
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