

## Flavored Spirits

Spirits in their native form, due to impurities or lack of sufficient time to age, can be pretty rough. Then there are people who only like the hint of a spirits taste in their drinks. Hundreds of mixed drink formulas have been concocted to solve this problem, but sometimes it would be more efficient if the spirit was adulterated directly to alter its flavor.

Today in our "instant" world we now have the option of purchasing pre-flavored spirits from each of the major spirit categories. One of the oldest flavored spirits is Spiced Rum. Spiced rum is a tradition going back to the days of the Caribbean pirates. Spiced rum can be made from rum of any age, but if made from white rum, dark coloring is typically added for visual appeal.

While doing taste testing of small sampler bottles, I occasionally tried some of these flavored spirits, particularly those in the Rum family. Below are my brief impressions. Few of these sampled flavored spirits were what I, as an amateur alcoholic beverage drinker, found appealing. Those that I did especially like have been given an expanded summary.

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## **Rum Family =**

Admiral Nelson Spiced =

Watery. Spicing tastes artificial. Warms front of mouth a bit after swallowing.

Black Magic Black Spiced =

Burns. Chocolate-medicine flavor. Yucky aftertaste of expired cocoa.

Blackheart Premium Spiced =

Colored. Cherry-medicine flavor. Mild on the tongue, but makes you cough.

Calypso Spiced =

Colored. Alcohol overtones. Spearmint and spice flavor. Odd aftertaste.

Captain Morgan Original Spiced =

Mild. Vanilla and spice flavor. The "bud lite" of rum. Commonly mixed with cola.

Coulsons Spiced =

Colored. Dominating caramel candy flavor. Tastes fake.

Cruzan 9 Spiced (US Virgin Island) =

Mild. Light mixture of 9 spices. Warming. Good Neat, may get lost when mixed.

Kingston Spiced =

Colored. Mild and balanced. Slight chocolate milk aftertaste. Descent in eggnog.

Largo Bay Spiced (Barbadian) =

Weak. Light spice flavor that doesn't really mesh.

Margaritaville Authentic Island Spiced =

Colored. Somewhat watered down tasting. Light, sweet, caramel flavor.

RonDiaz Spiced (Barbadian) =

Very weak. Marshmallow flavor with hints of spice. Aftertaste gets a little heartier.

Seven Tiki Spiced (Fijian) =

Slight burn. Weird grassy taste. Not suitable for making rum-style mixed drinks.

The Original Sailor Jerry Spiced =

Colored. Burns bad. Tangy, citrusy spices, overpowered by the awful burn.

===== *Spiced Rum Winners* =====

Shellback Caribbean Spiced: \$13

Mild, but 80 proof gives it noticeability. Attractive vanilla and caramel aroma. Dry spice flavor. Leaves a warm afterglow. This choreographed Gallo product has all the characteristics which the average person thinks of when they are asked to describe the stereotypical spiced rum. Descent Neat. Mixes well with cola, but not so much with dairy.

The Kraken Black Spiced: \$18

Seems like it was designed as a fantasy Caribbean Pirate rum for frat parties. 92 proof makes it strong, but it is not harsh. Dark color and flavor of sweet molasses, with just a hint of raspberry, gives it a fun sugar candy-like taste. It even comes in a jug.

Tropic Isle Palms Spiced Cask: \$11

Seems like it was designed as an instant pre-mixed drink. It has a banana and spice flavor, with a hint of maraschino-cherry. Breezy and very mild (even by Barbadian style standards) to drink Neat, it brings about thoughts of a tropic island resort. Not for mixing, and not a liquor you would normally reach for, but unintimidating to serve Neat to a lady who wants a light alcoholic beverage to slowly sip on a warm summer day.

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**Whiskey Family =**

Black Eagle Honey Flavor Bourbon =  
Heavy sweet texture. Yucky aftertaste.

Red Stag Black Cherry Flavor Bourbon =  
Mild. Tastes like black cherry flavored cough medicine.