

## Vanilla Extract vs Vanilla Essence (vsdiff.com)

Aspect	Vanilla Extract	Vanilla Essence / Imitation
Definition	Alcoholic solution made by extracting flavor compounds from cured <i>vanilla beans</i> .	Flavoring product that primarily contains <b>synthetic vanillin</b> (or concentrated flavor blends), not necessarily from whole beans.
Main ingredients	Cured vanilla pods + ethanol (sometimes water, sugar).	Manufactured vanillin (from guaiacol, lignin, or synthesized) + solvents and carriers.
Flavor complexity	Broad, multi-dimensional aroma due to hundreds of minor compounds.	More one-note; dominated by <i>vanillin</i> .
Typical alcohol content	Usually around ~ <b>35% ABV</b> in many traditional formulations (varies by region).	Variable — may be water- or glycerin-based; alcohol may be absent or low.
Labeling & regulation	Labeled as “pure vanilla extract” when derived from beans; many jurisdictions require specific standards.	Labeled “imitation” or “vanilla flavor” when synthetic; regulations differ by market.
Cost & availability	Generally more expensive; price sensitive to bean harvests.	Lower cost, widely available year-round.
Best culinary use	Applications where nuanced aroma matters (custards, ice cream, fine baking).	Everyday baking and where cost or alcohol-free formulation is favored.

Source: <https://vsdiff.com/vanilla-extract-vs-vanilla-essence/>