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OLD-SCHOOL REMIX

GET THE PARTY STARTED WITH THESE TWISTS ON FIVE CLASSIC COCKTAILS—ALL CREATED BY EAST BAY BARTENDERS. FROM A MODERN OLD-FASHIONED TO A FRUITY TAKE ON THE G&T, HERE'S WHAT TO POUR AT YOUR NEXT GATHERING.



“[CRAFTING COCKTAILS] IS SUCH A BEAUTIFUL ART. I LOVE BLENDING DIFFERENT FLAVORS AND INGREDIENTS TO CREATE A TRULY UNIQUE COCKTAIL, AND BEING A PART OF THE RICH HISTORY OF THE COCKTAIL WORLD.”

—ROB HAYES



➤➤ GARNISH GOALS

Garnishes are more than just eye candy. While a chile salt rim, fragrant flower, or slice of colorful citrus can all make for an Instagram-worthy drink, garnishes aren't solely there for looks. They're also meant to accentuate cocktails by providing flavor and aroma.

“For instance, those heart-shaped bitters dashes on top of a pisco sour are there to create aromatics of clove, cinnamon, and baking spices,” explains Rob Hayes, the master mixologist at Danville's Revel Kitchen and Bar. “And that beautiful bushel of mint in a whiskey smash gives a lighter aroma, changing the way your palate perceives the cocktail.”

Here, Hayes shares some garnishing tips and tricks so you can add a few fancy flourishes to your next homemade concoction.

DO THE SIDE SQUEEZE: “You get different flavors of oils from the skin of citrus, depending on how and where you squeeze it,” says Hayes. To separate the light and crisp oil from the heavy and bitter oil, squeeze the fruit at the side of the drink instead of over the top. As you do it, fan the oils with a coaster.

SMOKE IT OUT: Garnishing with smoke adds a cool, mysterious dimension to drinks—and it can be fun, too. Try it with a rosemary sprig: Light the herb with a wooden match until it starts smoking, then immediately place it on top of the drink, and serve.

ADD FLOWER POWER: Using edible flowers makes for a gorgeous presentation and subtly contributes to the taste of the drink. Hayes says orchids provide a buttery flavor while dianthus add a peppery kick.



FATHER AND SON

TWIST ON AN OLD-FASHIONED AND A VIEUX CARRÉ
CREATED BY ROB HAYES / REVEL KITCHEN AND BAR, DANVILLE

- 2 ounces WhistlePig 10-Year Straight Rye whiskey
- ½ ounce Singani 63
- ½ ounce Small Hand Foods gum syrup
- 1 dash cherry bark vanilla bitters
- 1 dash Peychaud's Bitters
- 1 large ice cube
- Lemon peel

Combine whiskey, Singani, gum syrup, and both bitters in a mixing glass. Stir for about 30 seconds. Strain the drink over ice in a rocks glass. Garnish with lemon peel.





“WHAT I ENJOY MOST ABOUT BARTENDING IS THE HUMAN ELEMENT: INTERACTING WITH ALL SORTS OF DIFFERENT CHARACTERS WHILE DISPLAYING YOUR OWN CHARACTER, AND PROVIDING GREAT SERVICE AND SOME ENTERTAINMENT.”

—RENATO BRIGNARDELLO



ESSENTIAL BAR TOOLS



BAR SPOON



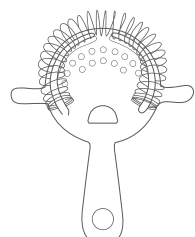
JIGGER OR SHOT GLASS



SHARP PARING KNIFE OR PEELER



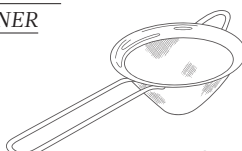
HAWTHORNE STRAINER



COCKTAIL MIXING GLASS



SHAKER



FINE MESH STRAINER

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROXANNE PASIBE

TURKISH ROSE G&T

TWIST ON A GIN AND TONIC CRAFTED BY RENATO BRIGNARDELLO / TELEFÈRIC BARCELONA, WALNUT CREEK

- Large ice cubes
- 1 ½ ounces Nolet’s dry gin
- 2 raspberries
- Meyer lemon twist
- 1 bottle Fever-Tree Mediterranean tonic water
- 1 basil blossom (or fresh basil leaf)

Fill a large wine glass halfway with ice. Add gin, raspberries, and Meyer lemon twist. Top with tonic water. Garnish with basil blossom.



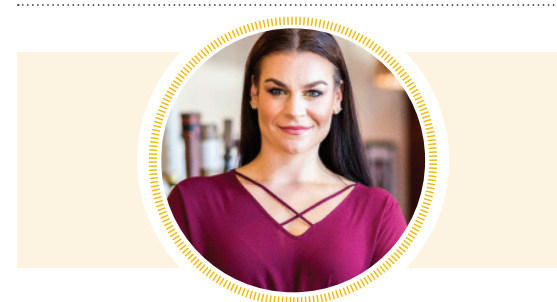
»» ICE, ICE, BABY

Ice may seem like an afterthought when you’re trying to get the mix of ingredients and garnishes just right, but ice is one of the most crucial components. The type you choose when crafting your drink makes a big difference: If the ice melts too fast, you’ll end up with watered-down flavors; too slow, and you’ll be overwhelmed with the taste of high-octane alcohol.

The quality and shape of the ice are also important. No one wants old, freezer-burned cubes to impart that funky, frosty flavor to an otherwise tasty drink. While you should always use cubes for shaking or stirring, when it comes to serving, consider these two options.

ICE CUBES: Use cubes when you want to keep your drink cold but don’t want it to get diluted. It’s best to use fresh, large cubes that are between one and two inches in diameter. A larger cube slows down the melting process, and helps you avoid having a drink that gets watered down too quickly.

CRUSHED: Crushed ice works for strong, high-alcohol cocktails that need to be diluted after they’re served. Smaller but denser than cubes, crushed ice covers more surface area to chill a libation quickly. It’s even easy to make: Simply fill a shaker with cubes, then use a muddler to break them up into dime-sized pieces.



“I WAS INTRODUCED TO [BARTENDING] THE DAY I TURNED 21 ... AND I WAS ENAMORED WITH THE VIBRANCY, CREATIVITY, ARTISTRY, AND INTENSITY OF BARTENDING. I’VE NEVER LOOKED BACK!”

—PORTIA BATTISTINI



RUM AND REASON

TWIST ON A BANANAS FOSTER CREATED BY PORTIA BATTISTINI / THE COOPERAGE AMERICAN GRILLE, LAFAYETTE

- 2 ounces Bayou Spiced rum
- 1 ounce Giffard Banane du Brésil liqueur
- ¾ ounce lime juice
- ¾ ounce lemon juice
- ½ ounce Orgeat
- 4 dashes Fee Brothers Old Fashion Aromatic Bitters
- Ice cubes
- 1 slice of brûléed banana

Combine rum, banana liqueur, lime juice, lemon juice, Orgeat, and bitters in a shaker. Add ice till higher than the level of the liquid, then shake for 8–10 seconds. Double strain the mixture into a coupe glass. Garnish with brûléed banana slice.





NEEDFUL THINGS

TWIST ON THE LAST WORD CREATED BY HOWIE SLATER / DREXL, OAKLAND

- 1 ½ ounces mezcal
- ¾ ounce lime juice
- ½ ounce Small Hand Foods passion fruit syrup
- ½ ounce Green Chartreuse liqueur
- ¾ ounce Luxardo Maraschino
- Ice cubes
- Grapefruit peel

Combine mezcal, lime juice, passion fruit syrup, Chartreuse, and Luxardo Maraschino in a shaker. Add ice till higher than the level of the liquid, then shake for about 10–15 seconds. Strain the mixture into a coupe glass. Garnish with grapefruit peel.



➤ MYSTERIOUS MEZCAL

Mezcal—tequila’s smoky sister—started gaining a cultish following a few years ago for its unique flavors and its artisanal origins. Now, the ancient spirit is quickly rising in popularity and shows no sign of slowing down. But many still aren’t sure what mezcal is and how it compares with tequila.

While tequila is made from farmed blue agave, mezcal can be crafted from more than 30 varieties of agave—many of which grow wild—and just like grape varieties, each has a unique flavor profile. Unlike grapes, however, most agave used to make mezcal can take 10 to 25 years to reach maturity.

Once the main ingredient is ready, mezcal is produced in small batches in rustic distilleries called *palenques*. The heart of the agave is slow roasted in wood-fired earthen pits—giving mezcal its signature smokiness—and then crushed. The juices are collected and fermented in open wooden or concrete tanks, and later distilled in copper or clay pot stills.

The final product can be well over 90 proof (compared with tequila’s typical 80 proof), but it’s not meant to be slammed. Instead, sip it neat at room temperature with orange slices. If you’re not sure which mezcal to buy, try a bottle by an acclaimed producer such as Del Maguey, Mezcal Vago, Montelobos, or Pierde Almas.



“MY FAVORITE INGREDIENT WOULD PROBABLY BE MEZCAL. THE FLAVORS AND TEXTURES YOU GET FROM NOT ONLY THE DIFFERENT VARIETALS BUT ALSO FROM THE DIFFERENT TERROIRS AND FERMENTATION AND DISTILLATION STYLES ARE ASTOUNDING.”

—HOWIE SLATER

“I LOVE TO USE SEASONAL INGREDIENTS, AND I’M CONSTANTLY ON THE LOOKOUT FOR WHAT’S IN SEASON AND WHAT’S COMING INTO SEASON.”

—JEREMY VADURRO



➤ RAISE A GLASS

Serving a cocktail in the right glass can greatly affect the drink’s aesthetics and functionality. While you don’t need to fill your cabinets or bar cart with every possible option, it’s helpful to have a few basics. To create the perfect starter collection, here’s the 411 on the various glasses used to serve up different mixed drinks.

COUPE: The coupe gained popularity in the 1930s as the go-to glass for champagne. Now, it’s enjoying a resurgence as a stylish choice for holding classic, elevated cocktails. Its smaller size makes it ideal for potent drinks served straight up (without ice).

CHAMPAGNE FLUTE: A flute’s tapered rim and tall, thin shape maintain the bubbles in the glass longer.

ROCKS: Also known as an old-fashioned glass, the rocks is one of the most versatile glasses out there. You can use it for just about any mixed drink served on the rocks (over ice), so if you only buy one type of cocktail glass, make it this one.

TUMBLER: Like the rocks, a tumbler works as an all-purpose option. It has a sturdy, flat bottom and a slightly wider mouth than the rocks.

COLLINS: Named after the famous Tom Collins cocktail, this glass is designed for carbonated drinks. Its tall, slim shape helps drinks stay effervescent long after they’re poured.

PINT: This glass is typically used for large cocktails with low alcohol content. Sixteen-ounce Mason jars can also substitute for pints.



CALI 75

TWIST ON A FRENCH 75 CREATED BY JEREMY VADURRO / BEER BARON, LIVERMORE AND PLEASANTON

- 1 ½ ounces St. George California Citrus vodka
- ¾ ounce fresh lemon juice
- ½ ounce simple syrup (make your own using the recipe below)
- Ice cubes
- Crémant (or other brut sparkling wine)
- Orange twist

SIMPLE SYRUP

- 1 cup water
- 1 cup sugar

In a saucepan, combine water and sugar. Bring to a boil, and stir until sugar has dissolved. Let cool, and put in a squeeze bottle.

Combine vodka, lemon juice, and simple syrup in a shaker. Add ice higher than the level of the liquid, then shake for about 30 seconds. Double strain the mixture into a champagne flute. Top with a splash of Crémant. Garnish with orange twist.

