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## **COCKTAILS – How to Make and Enjoy them!**

By Barry Lear Copyright 2005

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## Part-I: Introduction

### Alcohol and Your Health

Almost everyone enjoys a drink with friends, but you’ve probably seen hassles and even injuries caused when someone had more than they could handle.

Alcohol is an option – not a necessity. Many people either never take it up or decide for health or other reasons to stop drinking alcohol, and their views are to be respected.

But other people, probably the great majority, use alcohol responsibly and you are the focus of this book.

Alcohol is a social lubricant, sort of like oil lubricates your car. Using too much can cause a lot of problems.

**If you are concerned about someone close to you misusing alcohol, ask the eBookwholesaler Member that supplied this book to you about another ebook called, “Take Control of Alcohol” which details the effects on health and other problems caused by alcohol misuse as well as information which can help anyone wanting treatment & support.**

Some studies indicate, but do not prove, that consuming small amounts of alcohol may help to reduce the chance of being affected by some heart conditions. Many factors affect this. You should only get advice on medical matters one-to-one from qualified medical practitioners, not articles in glossy magazines or that guy at last night’s party.

## 2. Drinks for Every Occasion

### Beer

Beer is not just ‘beer’ – there are several categories with their own distinctive qualities.

But also please realize that not all Ale, for example, is made in the same way as described here. Advances in technology, development and hybridization of plants and the increased focus by some companies on reducing their costs of production beyond the point which is possible while maintaining traditional methods of production, means that some brands which are sold as, say, lager, may not taste much like the traditional product.

Sometimes, for instance, different grains are substituted, chemicals such as oxygen and nitrogen are introduced to the product and other ingredients have been altered or replaced to give it the appearance and taste near-enough, in the supplier’s view, to the traditional drink.

**Ale** is produced from an early stage of fermenting beer which, in the traditional system, is casked with some added sugar. The drink continues to evolve, right up until you drink it!

**Beer** is a brewed drink. Grain is fermented by particular yeasts or malted barley and wheat. Beer usually has an alcoholic strength of no more than 8%.

**Lager** is a refreshing beer, produced from yeast, malted grain and hops. We can thank beer lovers in Germany around the 15<sup>th</sup> Century who stored their beer in very cold caves at high altitudes through summer for this drink. There have been other developments since, including mechanical refrigeration and the introduction of lager yeast cultures which made the production and distribution of the drink much easier.

**Stout** is descended from British **Porter**, a dark beer. The name indicates its full-bodied, or “stout”, quality. Stouts have a thick head of white bubbles, sometimes chemically enhanced, and their strong flavor has made them very popular when dining.

**Cider** is apple based. Originally, cider was not filtered, carbonated or otherwise changed. Thanks to the desire to make it more popular and profitable, many companies produce ciders which have been “improved” in these and other ways. **Scrumpy** is a traditional form of cider but, these days, not all Scrumpy is true to that model.

**Perry** has fermented pear juice where cider has apples. Perry was originally made with only the Perry variety of pears and purists say that Perry which is made with more common varieties of pears does not match up.

**Wine** is the delicious result of fermenting grape juice. Vintners add brandy to produce fortified wines.

All of the above - as well as spirits, such as rum, whisky and vodka - are used to add flavor and potency to drinks you will read about here or be offered in the future.

## The Basic Cocktails

Prohibition in the United States, as well as providing the foundation of some families' fortunes, is responsible for the development and popularity of mixed drinks like cocktails. Bartenders mixed their alcohol with other substances to hide it from law enforcement officers and wowsers as well as to improve the taste of their customers' illegal, cheaply produced drinks.

Preparing cocktails is not rocket science though some of the spirit used then could probably have fueled one.

For most cocktails, you just put some spirit like vodka or whisky in a glass, then add something to provide the “body” of your creation – that might be fruit juice, cream or whatever your imagination suggests.

Then, with many recipes, you color it with a liqueur and top it off with decorative touches like those little umbrellas or slices of fruit for eye appeal and so people can feel they are drinking something healthy respectively.

Their real purpose may be to add flavor(s) and nourishment or just bubbles and eye appeal.

### Essential Equipment

Many items you need for producing tasty cocktails can be found in the average kitchen but, if your budget allows, you can buy plastic or chromed steel implements which do the same task but look a bit more classy.

You could use a rolling pin instead of a mortar and pestle, a glass jar with a lid as an emergency Cocktail shaker and even egg cups for measuring cups.



Start with:

A bottle opener, corkscrew and can opener (have a spare one of each out of sight for when they go missing). You can get waiter’s tools which have combinations of these implements. Go for quality –you and your tools need to be strong enough to handle the demands of the job.

A cocktail shaker for cocktails and another for shaking one cocktail at a time. There are 2 distinct styles, the European has one container with a fitted top and a strainer inside that. The American style has two identical containers which fit together and have no strainer.

An ice Bucket for storing ice in the refrigerator and ice tongs for dropping the ice into the individual drinks.

Jigger – measuring glass for quantities up to 1<sup>1/2</sup> fluid ounces.

Mixing glasses for cocktails

A pitcher large enough to mix several drinks in at the same time.

## **Essential Supplies**

Ice in cubes and also as crushed slurry. Making the crushed version is much easier if you break up the cubes before you put them in the blender.

Mixers including soda water, juices and cola.

Spirits including rum and whisky as well as red and white wine.

There are many desirable but not essential accessories such as a gas-powered cork remover and ice crusher etc.

No bar is complete without supplies of nuts, crisps and/or pretzels. If you supply any nuts, make sure they are well separated from the other snacks because, these

days, many people are exhibiting an intolerance to even slight traces of certain varieties of nuts.

## **Tips for Bartending**

**T**his guide is no substitute for the professional Bartending courses but I'll give you some tips (not the monetary kind) which will help you to increase your friends enjoyment of your event and possibly enhance their impression of you.

A bartender must be very good at mixing drinks and mixing with people.

You'll need to be able to remember drink orders for a group (you'll soon develop respect for the unsung skills of the bar and waiting staff you encounter). Also, try to organize a mental schedule for the people at your bar, what they're drinking and when they may be wanting refills.

That's just the most obvious part of bartending. You've also got to keep an eye on the level of all your supplies; clean glasses, ice and the ingredients.

Don't worry about learning to juggle bottles in imitation of the professionals – your guests will just be looking to get good measures and quick refills.

## The Key Ingredient

The most important ingredient you can add to each drink which you serve is atmosphere – enhancing the experience which the customer has. That’s a combination of pleasantness and competence in putting the drink together.

Handling a cocktail shaker while continuing to talk with the waiting customers or friends doesn’t come naturally to all of us – it can take some practice. When you become comfortable with the standard methods, then and only then, should you think about whether you want to add the juggling and other flourishes.

**Building:** Simply pour the various liquids into the serving glass and they find their own levels. Give the drinker a swizzle stick so they can change the appearance between sips.

**Frosting:** Decorating the edge of the serving glass with sugar or salt is easy; just lightly rub a slice of a citrus fruit around the rim and then dip the edge into a small bowl of the powder. Twist the glass around to ensure a full, even coating of the rim.

**Layering:** An advanced method of preparing drinks with ingredients of different colors and “weights” (specific gravities). Grenadine has a high specific gravity while the s.g. of Southern Comfort™ is lower than that of water (but it has more kick, of course).

Start with the ingredient which has the highest s.g. and work down to the one with the lightest. Use a bar (or layering) spoon, measuring glass and the serving glass.

Measure each ingredient into the measuring glass and then flow it along the spoon’s twisted handle into the guest’s glass. You can adjust the spoon to reduce the speed of the liquid going into the glass which will reduce the amount of mixing of the ingredients which improves the layering effect.

Some bartenders put the bowl of the spoon inside the measuring glass while others put the pouring lip of the measuring glass on the twisted section of the spoon.

The second method is easier when you are learning but the first method offers a slight increase in the speed with which an experienced bartender can produce these eye-catching concoctions.

**Muddling:** You use a Muddler (many bar spoons have one on the back of them) to crush herbs, fruit or mint in the glass without risking damage to the glass or having to use your mortar and pestle.

**Shaking:** Put plenty of ice-cubes in your shaker – fill it more than half-way. Then, add the ingredients in descending order of alcoholic strength.

Clamp one hand on each end of the shaker and shake it until moisture appears on its outer surface. Now you can strain the drink into your customer’s glass.

**Stirring:** Use a rod, either metal or glass, to stir the ingredients together before straining the mixture into the drinker’s glass.

## Mixing Tips

Put your ice into the shaker before the liquid to chill the ingredients and reduce the dilution of the alcohol.

Stirring a drink keeps any ice cubes intact and does not cloud drinks based on Martini or other clear liqueurs. Don't stir too much or you will blend the alcohol with the other ingredients and dilute its effect.

Only shake drinks that contain thick ingredients; cream, eggs and heavy juices, for instance.

An electric blender eases the pressure on you but never use it to blend fruits which have hard seeds.

### Bar Measures (U.S.A.)

Cup	8 fluid ounces
Dash	1/32 fluid ounce
Fifth	25.6 fluid ounces Fifth of a gallon
Gallon	128 fluid ounces
Jigger	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> fluid ounces
Pint	16 fluid ounces
Pony	1 fluid ounce
Quart	32 fluid ounces 2 pints
Shot	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> fluid ounces
Snit	3 fluid ounces
Split	6 fluid ounces
Tablespoon	3/8 fluid ounce
Teaspoon	1/8 fluid ounce
Wineglass	4 fluid ounces

### Metric To U.S.A. Measurement Conversions

1 Dentiliter

1/3 fluid ounce

1 Deciliter	3 1/2 fluid ounces
1 Liter	34 fluid ounces
3.7854 Liters	1 gallon
9.4635 Deciliters	1 quart
1 Milliliter	1/30 fluid ounce
(Just under) 30 Milliliters	1 fluid ounce
750 milliliters	25 fluid oz (fifth)
500 milliliters	17 fluid oz (pint)
200 milliliters	6.8 fluid oz (half-pint)
1750 milliliters	59.7 fluid oz (half-gallon)
1000 milliliters (1 liter)	34.1 fluid oz (quart)



## Mixers and Garnishes

Mixers are non-alcoholic liquids which are used to add flavor and color to alcoholic drinks or replace or dilute them.

These are some of the most common:

Cola                                      Club soda                                      Cream (light and heavy)

Dry Ginger Ale                                      Lemonade                                      Orange juice

Other available fruit juices      Lemon sour (lemon juice & sugar)

Spring water                                      Syrups                                      Tonic water

Supply your guests with fresh juices (lemon and orange juices are the most essential ones) wherever possible and also have low calorie (“diet”) versions of the soft drinks available.

Grenadine is probably the most well-known syrup. It’s made from the pomegranate. Other fruit based syrups can add a hint of fruit without extra alcohol which you get with the liqueurs. You can make a bland, flavorless syrup with sugar and water (or get some Gomme from your liquor store).

## Garnishes

These add flavor and eye-appeal. The basics include Angostura Bitters, lemons, limes, cocktail onions and olives, any fruit which is in season, celery, bananas etc.

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