



# THE CRAFT COCKTAIL HANDBOOK

A Brief Guide to Making  
"Craft" Cocktails at Home

# FRESH JUICE

The first and easiest thing you can do to make great cocktails: *use fresh citrus juice!*

## CRAFT TIP:

Keeping fresh lemons, limes, (and if possible, oranges) around will make a world of difference in your cocktails. **Citrus juice diminishes in quality quickly after juicing.**

Juicing it fresh with a "press" style juicer will also press some of the oils into the drink, adding bright aromatics and fresh flavor.

## DO THIS:

Juice and use your citrus at the very last minute before you mix your drinks.



↙ Screenshot this to save for later

## JUICER TIPS

Bartenders choose a hand-held squeezing juicer because it's great at getting the most juice *and* it presses some of the citrus oil into the juice as well - making it taste and smell even brighter and more fresh.



Use a "press" style juicer like this one



Instead of a twisting style juicer like this one



**Don't be fooled by the "cup" shape - place your citrus in your juicer "cut" side down!**



## THE MARGARITA

- 2 oz Tequila
- 3/4 oz Cointreau
- 1 oz Freshly Squeezed Lime Juice
- 1/2 oz Agave Syrup
- (Optional) Kosher salt

Rim a short (rocks) glass with salt, then add ice. Add remaining ingredients to a cocktail shaker with ice and shake. Strain into prepared glass and garnish with a lime wedge or wheel.

# SIMPLY SIMPLE

Simple Syrup is a key ingredient for many cocktails, and it tastes best when you make it yourself!

## CRAFT TIP:

Simple syrup is a key ingredient in hundreds of cocktail recipes, so it's a vital component to your home bar. **Don't be tempted by the store-bought stuff!** Often they include artificial stabilizers and thickeners that are completely unnecessary. Simple syrup is literally just table sugar dissolved in water at a 1:1 ratio - check out the recipe to make your own below!

## DO THIS:

Make your own Simple Syrup! You'll save money and it will taste better.



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## HOW TO MAKE SIMPLE SYRUP

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Heat water to just under boiling. Add sugar and stir until dissolved. Chill until you're ready to use.

### TO MAKE SIMPLE SYRUP:

Use 1 cup of sugar and 1 cup of water

### TO MAKE "RICH" SIMPLE SYRUP:

Use 2 cups of sugar and 1 cup of water

## TIPS FOR SYRUP STORAGE

- Store your simple syrup in an airtight container in the fridge
- Simple syrup keeps for around 1 month in the fridge.
- Rich Simple syrup keeps for around 6 months.
- To help your syrups last longer, add a small amount (~1 tablespoon) of Vodka to the mix. This should add 3-6 months of shelf life.
- If your syrup looks cloudy, it's gone bad. Toss it and make another batch.



## THE OLD FASHIONED

- 2 oz Rye Whiskey
- 1/4 oz Rich Simple Syrup
- 2-3 Dashes Angostura Bitters

Add a large ice cube to an Old Fashioned or Bucket glass. Add all ingredients. Stir well and garnish with an orange or lemon twist.

# ALL ABOUT THE ICE

Shaking or stirring a cocktail causes up to 30% dilution. Make sure that 30% is high quality!

## CRAFT TIP:

Ice does more than just cool down your drink - it actually adds quite a lot of water. (Don't worry - your cocktail recipe has already planned for this!)

**When mixing cocktails, make sure you're using good quality ice.** If your home water tastes strongly of chlorine, consider using a filter before freezing it. Ice also tends to take on the odors of other things in your freezer, which will make their way into your cocktail too.

## DO THIS:

- ✓ Consider filtering the water you use to make cocktail ice.
- ✓ Carefully pack all foods in your freezer to ensure they can't release odors into your ice.
- ✓ Dump and re-make ice every month or two to ensure it's fairly recent.

## DIY CRUSHED ICE

Making your own crushed ice for cocktails couldn't be easier. Simply place your ice into a bag (preferably fabric but plastic will do) and whack it!

Traditionally bartenders use a large wooden mallet but a heavy saucepan also works well.



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## THE MOJITO

- 10 Leaves Fresh Mint
- 2 oz White Rum
- 3/4 oz Fresh Lime Juice
- 1/2 oz Simple Syrup
- 2 oz Soda Water (or enough to top)
- Crushed ice

Add crushed ice to a Collins or Highball glass. Muddle the mint in the bottom of your cocktail shaker. Add rum, lime juice and simple syrup. Add ice and shake well. Strain into the prepared glass and top with soda water. Garnish with mint, lime or both.

# EXPRESS YOURSELF

You often experience the aroma of a cocktail before you even taste it. Expressing citrus across the top is a great way to make that first aroma just as delicious!

## CRAFT TIP:

A sneaky trick bartenders often do when finishing a drink is to squeeze a piece of citrus peel across the top of the drink. **What looks like unnecessary flair is actually spraying a very fine mist of citrus oil on your drink.**

This heightens the aroma and makes your first sip oh-so-delicious! This is also a great way to hide the egg smell that often comes with cocktails made with egg whites.



## DO THIS:

After finishing a drink, peel a large chunk of rind off your citrus fruit with a vegetable peeler. Then hold it between your thumb and forefingers with the outside of the peel facing your drink. Squeeze! You should smell the bright citrus right away.

## HOW TO CUT CITRUS RIND:

**Step 1:** Wash your fruit. Since most citrus rind is not consumed, they are usually not washed between the orchard and your glass!

**Step 2:** Use a potato or vegetable peeler to simply peel a large chunk of rind off your lemons, limes or oranges.



## GETTING CREATIVE WITH AROMA

You're not limited by citrus - if you have a spritzer you can spray just about anything across the top of a cocktail. Here are some ideas for inspiration:

- Absinthe
- Bitters
- Baking extracts such as peppermint oil or rosemary extract, etc.

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## THE WHISKEY SOUR

- 2 oz Whiskey
- 1 oz Fresh Lemon Juice
- 1 oz Simple Syrup
- 3/4 oz Egg White

Add all ingredients to a cocktail shaker without ice and shake. Add ice and shake again. Strain into a coupe glass and garnish with a lemon peel.

Express lemon peel across the top of the cocktail to mask the egg aroma and add a bright citrus smell.

# BITTERS, PLEASE!

Often only found behind a bar, cocktail bitters are a bartender's best friend! Keep some of these around for a short-cut to delicious drinks.

## CRAFT TIP:

Cocktail bitters are often called the "bartender's spices" because they add a whole new layer of flavor to a cocktail. **They are a vital ingredient for any home cocktail bar.**

The good news is, they are also very inexpensive and last nearly forever!

## DO THIS:

Invest in one or two bottles of Cocktail Bitters for your bar. Check the "Bitters Bucket List" below for the best ones to start with. Just \$12 (for a ~4 oz bottle) should be enough to make 80-120 drinks!



## BITTERS BUCKET LIST

There are dozens - if not hundreds - of cocktail bitters on the market today. Here are the one's I'd recommend buying first - in order from "most important" to "totally optional".

1. Angostura Bitters (A must!)
2. Orange Bitters (Also very common in cocktails)
3. Peychaud's Bitters (Required for Sazeracs - skip if you're not a fan)
4. Celery Bitters (A good choice if you like savory drinks. Optional)
5. Chocolate Bitters (Great in a Manhattan or Old Fashioned, but optional)



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## THE MANHATTAN

- 2 oz Rye Whiskey
- 1 oz Sweet Vermouth
- 2 Dashes Angostura Bitters

Add all ingredients to a mixing glass with ice. Stir well. Strain into a coupe glass and garnish with an orange twist.

# TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Want "craft" quality drinks? Use the tools your craft bartender is using!

## CRAFT TIP:

Craft bar tools are designed to help craft bartenders create perfectly polished craft drinks. Choosing the same tools at home will give you a head start to do the same at home.

## DO THIS:

Invest in high quality bar tools to help you achieve optimal dilution, crystal clarity and a beautiful home bar to boot! Check your home bar against the "Craft Bar Toolkit" list below to make sure you have the best tools for the job.



## TOP OF THE LINE TOOLS

We're a bit biased - these are all from our custom line of premium barware. But we created them to be the best, and that's what we believe they are.

**SHOP NOW: [SHOP.ABARABOVE.COM](http://SHOP.ABARABOVE.COM)**

## CRAFT BAR TOOLKIT

You don't **need** all of these tools to make a craft cocktail - and if you're missing something, don't let it get in your way of experimenting with cocktail recipes.

**If you are looking for the top of the line equipment that your bartender is using, here's the list!**

### THE BEST OF THE BASICS



#### BOSTON SHAKER

The Boston Shaker is the best choice for a shaker that won't leak, break open or freeze shut. It can also be used as a mixing glass in a pinch!



#### HAWTHORNE STRAINER

The quintessential cocktail strainer, this one has an extra finely wound spring to catch every last shard of ice - before it gets to your glass. It's also compatible with cocktail shakers and mixing glasses.



#### JIGGER

Carefully measuring your ingredients is the only way to be sure you'll get the recipe right. This jigger has more measuring lines than the industry standard and is calibrated to < 5% accuracy.



#### EXTRA LONG MUDDLER

You're likely to be muddling in a shaker tin or pint glass at some point - get a muddler that's long enough so you won't bang your knuckles on the side of the glass! This one's ergonomically shaped, dishwasher safe, and a full 12" long, so you can muddle your mint, fruit or herbs without reaching for the band-aids.

### THE BEST OF THE BASICS



#### BAR SPOONS

Can you stir a cocktail with any spoon? Yes! But you're likely to get your fingers wet. These bar spoons are 12" long, designed to be long enough for stirring in any standard cocktail shaker or mixing glass. They are double welded for strength so you can also use the weighted end for cracking ice.



#### FINE STRAINER

Double-strain your shaken cocktails using both a Hawthorne and Fine strainer to get that extra smooth finish. This one has an extra fine mesh and large basket so you can also use it for creating infusions or straining multiple drinks at once.



#### MIXING GLASS

The bartender's choice for stirred cocktails. The Mixing glass has a heavy weighted base to keep it from sliding, and a perfect pourspout to minimize drips. Use a mixing glass to achieve optimal dilution on stirred cocktails like the Martini, Manhattan or Old Fashioned.



#### JULEP STRAINER

A perfect fit for any standard mixing glass, the Julep Strainer is the traditional choice for straining stirred cocktails. This one has an extra strong weld and hanging hook for storage.

**[GET THE TOOLS HERE](#)**

# "CRAFT" IS CARE

True "craft" is all about experimentation, trying new flavors and techniques, and having fun. If you make a drink you like, that's all that matters - even if it isn't "Craft!"

## CONTINUE YOUR CRAFT:

Learn more about these techniques and more at [ABarAbove.com](http://ABarAbove.com)

- [Cocktail Skills and Techniques](#)
- [All about Bar Ingredients](#)
- [Advanced Mixology](#)



## MIX WITH US!

Share your cocktail creations and questions in the Craft Cocktail Group!

[JOIN US](#)

## THE CRAFT BAR SHOPPING LIST:

Going shopping? Screenshot this list and you'll have a great head start for your next cocktail creation!

- Lemons
- Limes
- Oranges
- White sugar
- Angostura Cocktail Bitters
- Orange Cocktail Bitters