

## **BASIC TECHNIQUES**

Creating cocktails can be straight forward or artistic depending on the person, their tastes and how far they want to take it. Often the first lesson of Bartending School teaches the basic skills from shaking to pouring over a spoon. Most people can easily get by with these techniques in a professional situation. When tending bar at home – it's a definite!

### **Shaking**

Shaking is the method by which you use a cocktail shaker to mix ingredients together and chill them simultaneously. The object is to almost freeze the drink while breaking down and combining the ingredients.

Normally, this is done with ice cubes added to the shaker about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way to the top. Then pour in the ingredients, hold the shaker in both hands with one hand on top and one hand supporting the base.

Give the shaker a short, sharp, snappy shake. DO NOT rock your cocktail to sleep. When water has begun to condense on the surface of the shaker, the cocktail is chilled and ready to be strained.

### **Straining**

Most cocktail shakers are sold with a build-in strainer or hawthorn strainer. When a drink calls for straining, ensure you've used ice cubes, as crushed ice tends to clog the strainer of a standard shaker. If a drink is required shaken with crushed ice (i.e. Shirley Temple), it is to be served unstrained.

### **Stirring**

You can stir cocktails effectively with a metal or glass rod in a mixing glass. If you use ice, use them to prevent dilution and strain

the contents into a glass when the surface of the mixing glass begins to collect condensation.

## **Muddling**

To extract the most flavor from certain fresh ingredients such as fruit or mint garnishes, you should crush the ingredient with the muddler on the back end of your bar spoon, or with a pestle.

## **Blending**

An electric blender is often needed for recipes containing fruit or other ingredients that do not break down by shaking. Blending is a great way to combine these ingredients with others creating a smooth, ready to serve mixture.

Some recipes call for ice to be placed in the blender in which case you would use a suitable amount of crushed ice to produce a smooth, pleasant tasting drink.

## **Building**

When building a cocktail, the ingredients are poured into the glass in which the cocktail will be served. Usually, the ingredients are floated on top of each other, but occasionally, a swizzle stick is put in the glass, allowing the ingredients to be mixed.

## **Layering**

To layer or float an ingredient such as cream liquor on top of another, use the rounded, back part of a spoon and rest it against the inside of a glass. Slowly pour the liquor down the spoon and into the glass. The ingredient should run down the inside of the glass and remains separated from the ingredient below it.

## Flaming

Flaming is the method by which a cocktail or liquor is set alight, normally to enhance the flavor of a drink. It should only be attempted with caution, and for the above reason only, not to simply look cool.

Some liquor will ignite quite easily if their proof is high. Heating a small amount of the liquor in a spoon will cause the alcohol to collect at the top, which can then be easily lit. You can then pour this over the prepared ingredients.

Don't add alcohol to ignited drinks and don't leave them unattended. Light them where they pose no danger to anybody else, and ensure no objects can possibly come into contact with any flames from the drink. Always extinguish a flaming drink before consuming it.

There's nothing more depressing than a "frou frou" drink that has no decoration to it. Here are some of the more popular decoration techniques.

## **DECORATING YOUR COCKTAILS**

Decoration of a drink will normally consist of one or two fruit, herb, or cherry garnishes that either complement the flavor of the drink, contrast with the color, or both. It is important that you avoid overpowering the drink. When garnishing with fruit, be careful with the size. If it is too thin, it's flimsy and uneventful. A too-thick slice can unbalance the look and even flavor of the cocktail.

### **Citrus Twists**

To make a citrus twist, cut a thin slice of the fruit crosswise and simply twist to serve on the side of a glass or in it.

### **Citrus Peel Spirals**

To make a spiral of citrus peel, use a parer or vegetable peeler to cut away the skin, working in a circular motion. Take care not to cut into the bitter pith.

### **Citrus Peel Knots**

Use strips of peel and carefully tie each strip into a knot. Drop into the drink for a nice garnish.

### **Cherry-it**

Use to drizzle around the inside of the glass before you make the drink. Can be served at room temperature or chilled. The 68 brix cherry juice concentrate from Traverse Bay Farms is recommended.

### **Cocktail Sticks**

These extremely useful wooden cocktail sticks are needed for spearing through pieces of fruit and cherries. These are not re-usable. Plastic cocktail sticks, however, are re-usable provided they are washed and boiled.

## **Frosting/Rimming**

Margaritas and other mixed drinks often call for the rim of the glass to be coated with salt, sugar, or some other ingredient. This is known as frosting or rimming. The easiest way to do this is to rub the rim of the glass with a slice of citrus fruit and then dip the very edge of the rim into a small bowl filled with the sugar or salt.

## **Maraschino Cherries**

You should always have a plentiful supply of red maraschino cherries to decorate your cocktails with. These are the most widely used of decorations, as well as being available in multiple colors and flavors.

## **Olives or Onions**

Martinis are often garnished with olives or cocktail onions. Simply skewer one or two with a toothpick and drop into the drink.

## **Straws**

Straws are essential and go well with many cocktails. These, of course, should never be re-used.

Before we move on to the good part – recipes – we need to address the issue of bar safety and hygiene.

## **HYGIENE AND SAFETY**

Here a few guidelines to remember regarding hygiene and safety in a bar whether it be at home or at work. While most of these suggestions might be common sense, they bear notation in this book for the safety of you, your guests and/or your customers!

Always be tidy, clean, and diplomatic. Always rinse or wash bar equipment like cocktail shakers and strainers after every use – even between drinks.

Always wash and dry your hands frequently – especially after contact with citrus fruit and juices. This helps prevent scaling of the hands and infection from dermatitis.

Take good care of your hands – especially your fingernails as these are always in view. Keep nails short. If you use nail polish, use neutral colors so the focus is on you and your creations instead of your fingernails.

In general, it is frowned upon to smoke or drink while working behind a bar. Many people view it as unsanitary. In some places, it is also illegal.

When uncorking champagne, try to prevent the pop of the cork. While this is usually associated with champagne, it can be a dangerous practice if the cork should become errant.

When using a soda siphon, handle it by the plastic or metal part only. This is the most sanitary way to approach pouring a soda.

Never fill a glass to the brim. This encourages spilling and makes the entire bar unsanitary and messy.

Now, let's look at some of the more common drink recipes.