

AGO PERRONE

MASTERING MIXOLOGY

> INSPIRATION IS EVERYWHERE, IN WHAT MOTHER NATURE GIVES US THROUGHOUT THE SEASONS, IN GARDENS, IN SPICE MARKETS.

BBC MAESTRO

COURSE NOTES 2.0

THE LESSONS

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> MIXOLOGY IS ABOUT DELIGHTING ALL THE SENSES...

ABOUT THIS COURSE

HELLO, I'M AGO PERRONE

For me mixology is about so much more than combining ingredients in a glass. It involves all the senses. It is about connecting with history and honouring the roots of the world's classic cocktails while creating new twists to excite the palate. It is about being inspired by people, memories and different cultures around the world, and understanding flavour combinations, the provenance of ingredients and their seasons. This is what makes cocktail-making endlessly engaging and exciting.

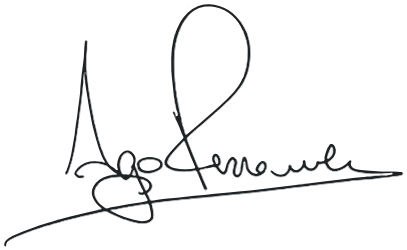
When I was invited to take the lead of The Connaught Bar in 2008, the challenge was to do something revolutionary by injecting innovation and personalisation into the classical, elegant style of a five-star hotel bar. Now, in this course, I want to inspire you to do the same, but like everything in life, you need to understand the basics before you can let your imagination fly.

So, first we will look at what you need to set up a home-bar. Then I will introduce you to the essential bartender's techniques and tell you stories about the cocktails and their origins as we go along. I want you to understand the classic structure that defines each drink, but also share my own twists and suggest more variations for you to explore along the way. As we work through the lessons, I will help you expand your skills and creativity using home-made preparations and more complex techniques, so you can begin to develop your own signature recipes.



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I invite you into my world, in which the shape of the ice and the sound it makes in your shaker, the quietness of stirring in a mixing glass, the drama of pouring a Martini from a height, or the precision and delicacy with which you carve a citrus peel for garnish, all add up to the music and theatre of mixology. Cocktail-making is about entertaining friends, sharing your creations and bringing your own personality to the party with style – and, always, a smile!



HOW TO USE THESE COURSE NOTES

I suggest you use the notes in conjunction with the online lessons, as a reminder of everything you need to know about each cocktail, and as a quick resource for all the recipes, as well as my suggestions for ways to be creative with each drink. In the notes I also give you my key dos and don'ts for each cocktail, and there are additional recipes and instructions for how to achieve some of the garnishes shown in the videos.

> INSPIRATION IS EVERYWHERE, IN WHAT MOTHER NATURE GIVES US THROUGHOUT THE SEASONS, IN GARDENS, IN SPICE MARKETS.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- **A respect for the classics combined with a creative spirit**
- **The enthusiasm to master new skills**
- **The capacity to develop your sense of sight, smell, and taste**
- **An openness to inspiration all around you**
- **A sense of theatre**
- **Dedication to your guests, whether that's you or your close ones**

01. INTRODUCTION

I have been a professional bartender for over 25 years, during which time I have travelled the world, discovered new environments, cultures and histories. I have been inspired by so many people and ingredients, all of which I have stirred and shaken into the liquid story that is the cocktail.

Growing up near Lake Como in the north of Italy my first love was photography. I planned to become a photographer and so to fund my studies I began to work as a bartender, but immediately I became fascinated by the world of mixology. It is not only the art of bringing together flavours and aromas, but about history, connecting with people, and creating memorable moments.

In 2003 I came to London and worked in some of the city's innovative bars, before I was approached to launch the newly refourbished Connaught Bar at The Connaught, in 2008. This was an opportunity to do something unique, and build a new, creative mixology approach through which guests could take centre-stage in the drinking experience. Over the last sixteen years the Connaught Bar has won countless accolades and has twice been named best bar in the world, but we never stand still. Our cocktails are always evolving following our inspiration, without losing the essence of our style.

Now, in this **BBC Maestro** course, I want to bring you of all my experience.

I will show you how to make the most iconic, classic cocktails, from Martinis and Margaritas to the Negroni and Old Fashioned. And, since every classic cocktail has a story, we will travel back through time to find out when and where each one is said to have been created.

I will guide you through the tools you need to set up a bar at home and help you to understand the DNA or structure of each drink and its characteristic balance of flavours. We will go through the mixing techniques, step by step, and I will show you how to make and use home-made preparations to create new flavours and aromas.

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Thanks to their structure and simplicity, the classics have stood up to the test of time but equally they are ripe for experimentation, so I will introduce you to some of my own favourite twists and variations and encourage you to be creative with ingredients and flavour combinations, using your new skills to bring your own personality and style to your favourite cocktail.

Inspiration is everywhere, in what mother nature gives us throughout the seasons, in gardens, in spice markets. This is what makes cocktail-making so fascinating. When I was young my family travelled each year to Puglia, where my uncle grew figs, olives and all kinds of fruits and vegetables in the sunshine, and their fantastic flavours and aromas are forever stored in my memory bank.

I still have a passion for photography and when I travel around the world and see something that inspires me, I take a picture to remind me of new ingredients or ways to present a cocktail, because mixology is about delighting all the senses. We drink first with our eyes, so visually the way that a cocktail looks is very important. Next, we experience the aromas – so when you are in a market or a garden and find yourself enchanted by the aromas all around you, take a moment to close your eyes, really inhale and commit these to your memory as aromas are shortcuts to emotion and inspiration. And finally, flavour. A mixologist plays with flavours like a chef, and as you learn more about the roots of each drink, you will begin to develop your palate and use your instincts and creativity to bring ingredients together in innovative ways.

By the end of this course, I hope you will be confident in mastering mixology, not only for your own enjoyment but to engage and entertain your friends and enjoy the moment of creation with them. Shaken or stirred? In this course you will try both techniques and figure it out for yourself.

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02. BAR SET-UP

So, what do you need to set up a cocktail bar in the comfort of your own home?

These are the basics, which may seem like a long list but, as with all things in life, once you start to develop your skills you can decide for yourself what you really need, and which bar tools best suit your style.

Wherever you set up your bar, try to give yourself some space in which to organise everything before you start to make your cocktails. Give yourself room to move, especially as you become more flamboyant and begin to engage your friends in the theatre of mixology.

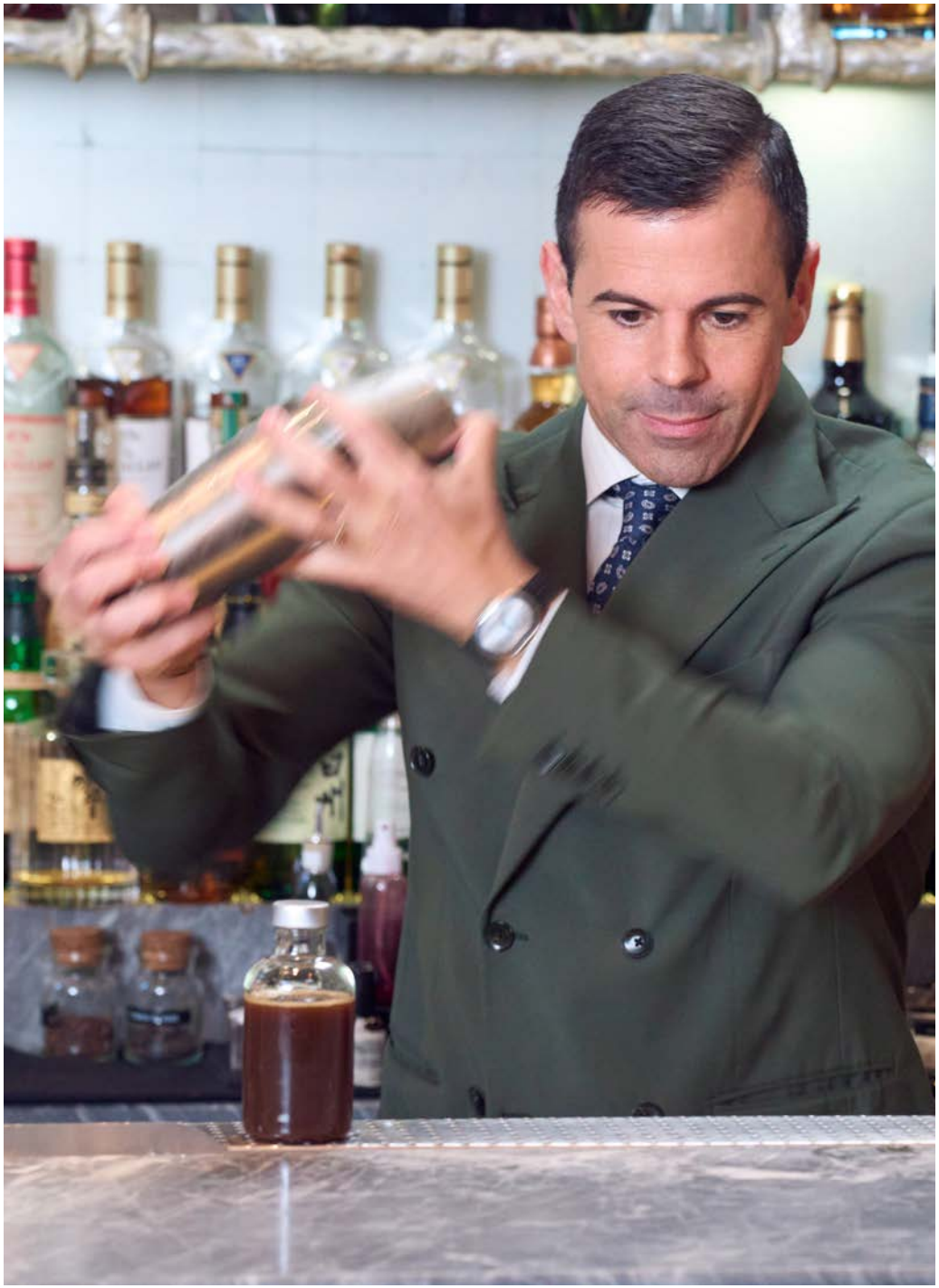
MIXING GLASS

For stirred cocktails. This is a wide, straight sided glass with a spout for pouring which allows you to easily chill and dilute your mix over ice. Stirring (versus shaking) allows you to mix without incorporating air into the drink, so the texture is smoother and silkier. This is often the case for cocktails that contain only spirits. There are also available mixing tins with a spout or, alternatively, the tin of a Boston shaker can be used to replace a mixing glass if necessary.

SHAKERS

You cannot be a bartender without a shaker! The shaking process aerates the drink, giving it a lighter texture while mixing the ingredients. There are two main types: the two-piece shaker, which consists of two metal tins, which we use for cocktails with a bigger volume and more dense ingredients such as fresh fruit; and the three-piece shaker, which has a tin, a built-in strainer and a cap. We use this one for short cocktails, such as a Martini, or cocktails with spirits, plus liquor, plus a citrus component (no puree or fresh fruit though).

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JIGGER

Before you start mixing or shaking your cocktail you need to measure your ingredients accurately. We use a jigger, which is a steel measuring vessel. These come in several different sizes, and you can buy single jiggers with markings up to 75ml. Usually this type of jigger has more markings inside showing different measures. I personally prefer the double-sided ones which allows you to measure 30ml on one side, then turn the jigger over to measure 60ml.

STRAINERS

You will need two strainers. After you have mixed or shaken your cocktail with ice in a mixing glass or two-part shaker you need a strainer to filter and separate the liquid from the ice and any solids, such as fruit. So, the first strainer you need is a flat metal one, known as a Hawthorne strainer, which fits over the top of your mixing glass or shaker tin. You can also use a tea strainer. You only need to hold it in place with your index finger as you pour. Sometimes, especially if you are using home-made preparations containing fruit or herbs, you will need to double strain your cocktail through a second small, fine-mesh strainer held over your glass while you pour.

BAR SPOON

For stirred cocktails, this is the bartender's best friend. The long-handled spoons come in all sorts of different sizes and looks. Have at least one that feels good in your hand and will give you confidence as you stir, **so that the action becomes second nature.**

MUDDLER

You might like one of these, which is similar to a pestle and is used to 'muddle' or break up and gently crush herbs and other fresh ingredients, for example mint in the **Mojito**.

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A DROPPER

A small glass dropper bottle is good for adding bitters and essences, when you want just a dash of something that will make a big difference in your cocktail.

TONGS

Tongs allow you to place ice into your mixing glass, shaker or serving glasses elegantly rather than dropping in the cubes noisily! You also need a long pair of tongs or tweezers to allow you to add garnishes with precision.

TOOLS FOR ICE

If you make your own **blocks of ice** you will need an ice machete, saw and an ice pick to break up big chunks of ice. I will show you how to do this (carefully!) in both the lessons on **ice** and **the Martini**.

CITRUS JUICERS

A simple citrus squeezer is fine, but the one I especially like for lemons and limes is the 'Mexican elbow' press, which allows the juice to flow without the pips.

VEGETABLE PEELER

Use this for peeling citrus fruits for preparations and garnish.

KNIVES

You will need a kitchen knife for cutting large fruit. A sharp tomato knife is handy for cutting citrus fruit, and a small paring knife for shaping and 'manicuring' citrus peel for garnish.

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MEASURING JUG & KITCHEN SCALES

For making batch cocktails and preparing your own mixes such as **sherbets** and **shrubs**. If you are using your scales to weigh ingredients such as fruit, you can also weigh your liquids, as 1g is virtually the equivalent of 1ml.

HAND-BLENDER

Once you start making home-made preparations, you might need to blend certain ingredients, so a hand-blender is useful.

SMALL VACUUM MACHINE

Jars and bottles of home-made preparations and pre-mixed cocktails can take over your fridge, so I suggest you buy a small vacuum machine which will allow you to seal your preparations in bags which you can lay on top of each other in order to save space (I will explain more about this in the lesson on **soda** on).

LABELS

It is important to know what is inside your bottles, jars or vacuum bags, so it is a good idea to have some coloured tapes or labels, on which you can write the name of the preparation, the date it was made and how long it can be kept for.

ACCESSORIES

Along with straws and stirrers, you might like to have a set of cocktail picks for your olives and garnishes. You can find many different styles, from minimal to vintage, to suit your personality. A blow torch, atomiser for spraying essential oils diluted in alcohol and a duster/shaker for decorating with powdered citrus or other ingredients are also good additions to your home bar.



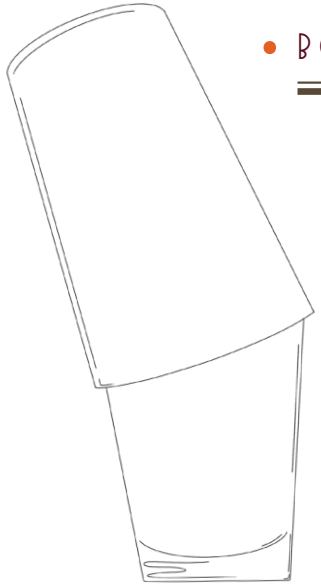
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BAR SET-UP UTENSILS

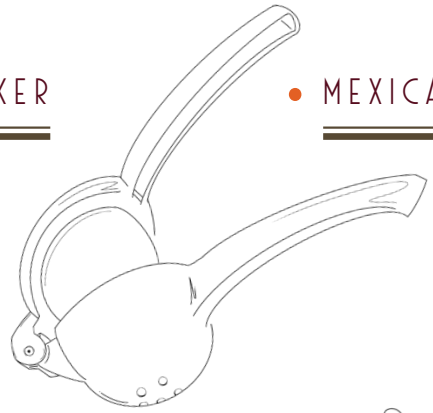
- MUDDLER



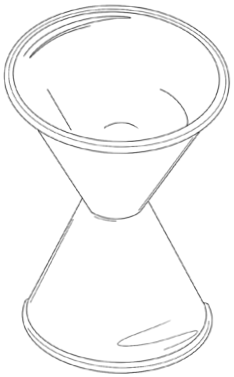
- BOSTON SHAKER



- MEXICAN ELBOW



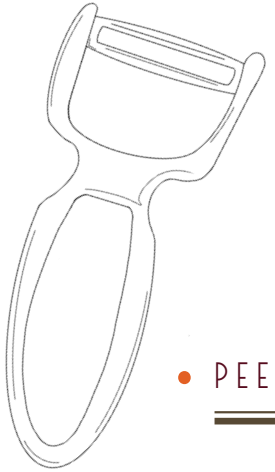
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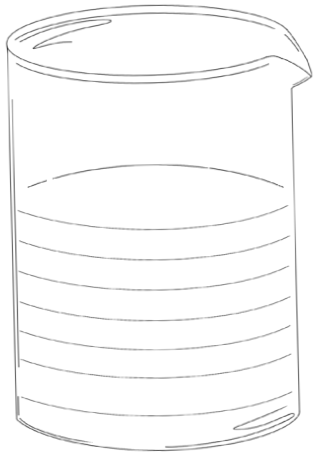
- COBBLE SHAKER



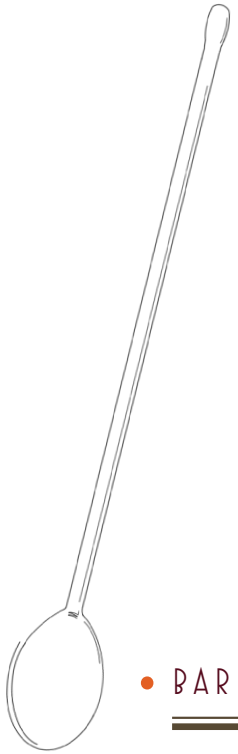
- PEELER



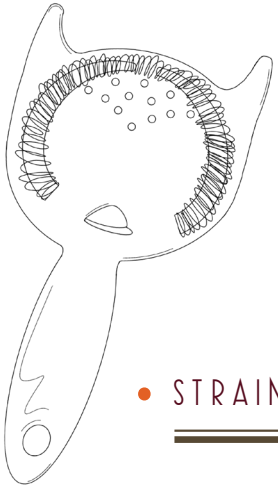
- MIXING GLASS



- BAR SPOON



- STRAINER



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GLASSWARE

The shape, look, feel and the weight of the glass when it touches the lips all contribute to the sensory experience, which is why most classic cocktails are traditionally served in a particular shape of glass to enhance the aromas, flavours and textures. Choose your own style of glassware, which could be contemporary or classic – but for the best experience try to choose thinner, more delicate glasses, which will allow the flavour and texture to overwhelm the palate.

The main shapes of glass we will be using throughout this course are:

- ## MARTINI OR COCKTAIL GLASS
  The classic 'V' shape for all Martini cocktails.
- ## COLLINS GLASS
  Tall and narrow.
- ## HIGHBALL GLASS
  Like the Collins, but a little shorter and wider.
- ## ROCKS GLASS
  Short and wide.
  Sometimes also called an Old Fashioned glass, after the classic cocktail.
- ## COCKTAIL COUPE
  A saucer-shaped glass.
  The coupette is a slightly smaller version.
- ## WHITE WINE OR TULIP GLASS
- ## SMALL LIQUEUR GLASS



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CHILLING THE GLASSES

Always chill your glass in advance. You can do this by placing them in the freezer for 10 minutes before use, or in the fridge for 20 minutes at least. This will give the glasses a frosted look initially. Alternatively fill them with crushed ice (a splash of soda helps to melt the ice and speed up the process) and spin them around then tip away the ice and excess water before pouring your cocktail.

A NOTE ABOUT INGREDIENTS:

ICE

Ice is to the bartender what fire is to a chef, an essential ingredient which not only chills the cocktail but through shaking or stirring introduces the correct amount of dilution to bring all the ingredients together. The quality of ice is paramount as it allows the cocktail to chill faster without compromising its dilution. It should be as pure and clear as possible, in order to give that silky, velvety texture which makes the cocktail elegant on the palate. In the dedicated lesson on **ice** I will show you how to make your own blocks of crystal clear ice at home, and explore some of the different shapes, from large cubes to spheres, which can help your finished cocktail to look even more impressive.

Some cocktails are classically served ‘straight up’ i.e. shaken or stirred with ice, but with no additional ice in the glass. Others are ‘on the rocks’, i.e. ice is placed in the glass also.



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> THANKS TO THEIR STRUCTURE AND SIMPLICITY, THE CLASSIC COCKTAILS HAVE STOOD UP TO THE TEST OF TIME, BUT EQUALLY THEY ARE RIPE FOR EXPERIMENTATION.

BITTERS

In many of the cocktails, adding a few drops of bitters contributes to the complexity. Bitters began to be used from around 1690 when they were first created by London apothecary Richard Stoughton, for medicinal purposes.

You would go to the apothecary where there would be a counter, almost like a bar, where the dry botanicals would be mixed and infused with alcohol to extract the properties of the ingredients.

The best known are **Angostura Bitters**, which were created in the 1870s, but now you can find many different styles. At the Connaught we have a set of five bitters made especially for us, which range from lavender to coriander, tonka bean and black cardamom, and include Dr Ago's (Dr Ago is my nickname!) – a combination of bergamot, citrus and gentian.

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CITRUS FRUITS

When you use citrus fruits in a cocktail freshness is everything. If you squeeze a lemon or lime and leave the juice for five minutes it will already start to oxidise – taste it and compare it to juice that has just been squeezed, and you will understand what fresh truly means! In just those five minutes the flavour and aroma will be different, so imagine if you leave the lemon juice for a day. It will continue to oxidise to the point where you can't really call it fresh lemon juice anymore, and the difference will affect the finished cocktail.

Also remember that the flavours of citrus, like all fruits, can change according to the season and the place of origin, which is why it is important to taste your cocktail, in case you need to make adjustments.

Before squeezing limes, roll them first on your bar or work surface, under the flat of your hand, to massage the skin and soften it, so when you squeeze the lime you will be able to extract the most juice. As a general rule, an average-size lime will give you about 20-25ml of juice.

When using a Mexican elbow press, in order to create a flat base to enable the press to grip the halves of lime more easily, trim the top and bottom of the fruit before cutting in half. The Mexican elbow allows to squeeze some of the essential oils of the citrus to add fragrance to the juice. However, be mindful when you squeeze not to apply too much pressure towards the end as you might extract some of the bitterness from the white pith.

We also use citrus peel as a garnish as their essential oils contribute to the cocktail so I always choose unwaxed, organic fruits, which I wash and dry before using.

SUGAR / SUGAR SYRUP

Sugar binds ingredients together and brings out flavours, a little like salt in cooking. Some cocktails use sugar, others a sugar syrup or even a flavoured **sugar syrup** to add bespoke notes to the mix.

ESSENTIAL OILS

The classic way to introduce a burst of aroma to a cocktail is to add a garnish of citrus peel, squeezing it gently to release a little of the natural oils. However, you can also buy more sophisticated, special essential oils designed to elevate the whole sensory experience through selected ingredients and flavours.

There are two kinds of these essential oils. Absolute oils are pure essential oils which are highly concentrated extracts from different plants and are dispensed from dropper bottles. Only one drop is needed to add flavour to spirits and cocktails. Take care when using these pure oils and be mindful of all the usual cautions.

Essential oils which have been diluted in alcohol are used in small spray bottles, for misting around the cocktail to add a wonderful aroma.

TECHNIQUES:

STIRRING

Stirring looks very easy but like everything requires some experience. First, using your tongs, stack the mixing glass with ice. Don't put in only a few cubes, thinking you must leave space for the liquids. More ice is better because it is the contact between liquid and ice which creates the right temperature, texture and dilution.

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Hold the base of the mixing glass with one hand and with the other plant your bar spoon deep into the glass with its rounded back facing the edge. The aim is to keep the spoon facing this way as you stir. I suggest you practice with an empty glass to begin with. This movement is generated from the wrist rather than the shoulder, arm or fingers.

Stirring should be quiet, so much so that you could mix a cocktail in a library with no one noticing! Be warned, though, it can be quite hypnotic, so remember to stop after about 25-30 seconds. Try not to over-stir, or you will begin to lose the structure of the cocktail.

The ice in your mixing glass should start to melt before you add your spirits and other ingredients, hold the strainer over the glass and drain off any excess water first.

SHAKING

When you shake a cocktail, you agitate it, creating aeration. You break the ice a little more than in a stirred cocktail, so there is a different alchemy between the liquid, ice and oxygen. In very simple terms you might get more dilution, a colder drink, and more aeration, which allows the flavours to expand.

The shaking movement is not about pulling and pushing the shaker back and forth so that the ice smashes, it is about moving the ice around the shaker, from the top to the bottom. So, clasp the shaker with one hand on the top, the other on the bottom, and lift it up to around shoulder height and shake vigorously, with the movement coming from the elbows. The sound the ice creates as it travels around the shaker is the music of a good cocktail bar! This movement should come simoultaneously from the shoulder, elbow and wrist, creating smooth, circular motions.

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People ask me, 'Ago, when is it ready?' and I say, 'It is ready when it is ready. It is like asking your grandmother when the soup is ready. She just knows' A cocktail with many ingredients will take a little longer than a short drink, but as a guide, after about 15-20 seconds you will feel the coldness coming through the shaker and see a frosted layer form on the outside. If you rub your finger through the frosting it will almost stick to the metal. This is when you know the cocktail is ready to be poured.

BUILDING

This is the simplest way of making a cocktail in which the ingredients are added straight into the serving glass with ice. When building a cocktail, make sure all home-made ingredients come straight from the fridge to avoid extra dilution.

GARNISHING

As I mentioned in the introduction, you drink with your eyes before you taste, so the garnish is important, not only to the look of the cocktail, but often to the aroma and flavour too, in the case of citrus peel or an olive. Many of the cocktails have a classic garnish, but you can also be imaginative (for how to make citrus dust, **fruit leathers**, etc.) Adding the garnish is a gesture in itself, part of the show, so use your tongs/tweezers, especially when placing delicate garnishes. When garnishing, play with harmony or contracts of colours and shapes to create the perfect presentation.

TESTING

You must taste as you go, so that you can develop your palate and understand what is happening in the mixing glass or shaker, and whether you need to add a little more of one ingredient. You only need to taste a few drops. The way to do this is either to dip a straw into the drink or, if you are using a mixing glass, drop a little from your mixing spoon onto the back of your hand. When using fruits, especially citrusses, note that tasting is key as the acidity, sweetness and flavours change significantly according to the season and provenance.

03. THE MARTINI

It is not just a drink. It is about holding the beautiful V-shaped glass by the stem, feeling as though you are in a James Bond movie. On one hand this iconic drink is one of the simplest cocktails, but it can also be one of the most versatile. Every bartender and Martini aficionado has their own favourite, and there are so many nuances and variables which you can explore, so use your imagination to discover 'your way'. I hope that the three Martinis I am going to show you will inspire you to spend many hours experimenting so that you can surprise your friends with your own, signature version.

First, as we will do with each cocktail in this course, let's look at the basic DNA of the drink.

As with most classic cocktails, the exact origins and history of the Martini are disputed, but a broadly accepted version is that it originates from the Martinez cocktail, which first appeared in print in *The Modern Bartender* by O. H. Byron in 1884. This linage is complicated by the apparance of an array of variations but regardless of the one we decide to accept, the first recipe of a Martini cocktail appeared a few years after as a mix of gin, sweet vermouth, orange curaçao and gomme syrup. Slowly over the years bartenders began to explore other variations, including the use of vodka and dry vermouth. From wet to dry (depending on how much more or less vermouth is used), to nacked or reverse (more vermouth than spirit) or even dirty (which we will see later), there are endless combinations to a Martini cocktail.

The modern Martini still breaks down into two main elements: the spirit, which can be gin or vodka; and vermouth, a fortified wine flavoured with botanicals, which enhances the herbal notes and botanicals of gin, or adds an extra herbaceous element to vodka. The third element is the addition of your choice of bitters. Finally, the cocktail is classically garnished with a twist of lemon peel or an olive.

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Gin or Vodka? This is the first decision – though there is a version, the Vesper Martini, which I will show you later in this lesson, which uses them both!

Vodka can be made from different ingredients, such as rye, wheat, potato, grapes, all of which have different nuances of aroma and taste.

The world of gin is also huge, from the most classic London Dry to the sweeter, botanical Old Tom, and more modern flavoured gins, distilled with added aromas such as Douglas Fir, bergamot or yuzu, which can be very exotic and tropical.

I suggest you start to explore different styles of each spirit. Taste them on their own first, then try them in the cocktail and register the differences.

Now for the vermouth, which can be a single style or a combination. I like to make up a bottle of different styles of dry vermouth in equal parts: one very dry, one with more herbal and citrus notes, and one that is slightly bitter and woody, in order to create a full bouquet of aromas. Examples you might like to choose from to make your own combination include 1757 Vermouth di Torino Extra Dry, Martini, Noilly Prat or Cocchi.

Then of course you have to consider the big question of the ratio of spirit to vermouth. Every bartender has their own idea, and you can be playful and experimental with this, but my favourite is 5:1, i.e. 75ml of spirit and 15ml of dry vermouth.

The personalisation of your Martini continues in the aromatics you add in the form of bitters. Begin with just a few drops. You can always add, but you can't take out!

And finally, shaken or stirred? James Bond liked his Martini shaken but let me tell you that one of the most famous James Bond actors changed his mind after I made him a stirred Martini!

Each method marries the ingredients differently to give a certain structure, dilution, texture and taste profile. In the Martini recipes that follows we will explore both methods and then you can decide!

THE CONNAUGHT MARTINI

This is the ultimate in personalisation, my favourite take on the classic cocktail: stirred, not shaken. At The Connaught Bar we make the cocktail according to each customer's choice of vodka or gin and their preferred bitters. We also revived the idea of the drinks trolley, which was a feature of restaurants in New York in the thirties when, even after the prohibition laws were repealed, restaurants were not allowed to have bars visible to their guests, so trolleys were loaded to serve customers at their tables. I love to take our trolley with its selection of gins, vodkas and bitters to our guests and put on a show.

As I mentioned previously, we have a set of special bitters made for us, and for this Martini I want something fresh, and citrusy with a little bit of woodiness, so I would use Dr Ago's, a combination of bergamot, Italian citrus and gentian, an alpine herb which gives a balsamic, woody element. Alternatives that you can buy include Angostura Orange bitters, Regan's Orange Bitters, The Bitter Truth Lemon Bitters or Scrappy's Grapefruit Bitters.

You can make the cocktail with gin or vodka, but for this recipe I am going to use gin.



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THE GLASS:

Martini or cocktail glass

THE INGREDIENTS:

15ml dry vermouth (use a blend, if you like, see previous)
75ml London Dry gin
2 drops of aromatic bitter of choice
peel of an organic, unwaxed lemon or green olive, for garnish

THE METHOD:

Use your tongs to fill the mixing glass with ice and give it a stir to chill the mixing glass before pouring the ingredients. Discard the excess of water from this first move and then add the gin, the dry vermouth and stir.

Use a dropper to coat the inside of your chilled Martini glass with a few drops of the bitters, letting them roll down the glass. It is up to you how much you put in, and it also depends on the style of bitter. Some are quite soft, others can be quite intrusive, in which case use a little less.

Now pour the drink into the glass. Pouring a Martini is an art in itself. As barmen we are trained to allow the liquid to flow into the glass from a height, which makes it more engaging and theatrical but also adds aeration. Aeration allows the flavours and aromas to expand and blend together creating a new experience and synergy.

If you are going to garnish your Martini with a twist of lemon (see opposite), have the strip of peel ready. Tilt the mixing glass, holding the Hawthorne strainer in place with your finger, and as you begin to pour, raise the mixing glass as high as you dare, and at the same time squeeze a little of the essential oil from the lemon peel into the glass before adding the peel to the drink. You will see a few tiny drops of the citrus oil floating on the surface of the cocktail, enough to enhance the drink without overpowering the nose and palate.

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My motto when pouring a Martini, is 'straight up with style and don't forget the smile!' Once you get used to this dual action of pouring and squeezing the lemon peel, you can look your guests in the eye as you perform this little piece of theatre and give them a smile as you do so!

FOR THE GARNISH:

Classically a Martini is garnished either with a twist of lemon or an olive. Use an unwaxed, organic lemon, as the essential oils in the skin will go into the cocktail. Wash and dry the lemon, and then with a vegetable peeler, carve a thin piece of peel, taking as little as possible of the bitter white pith. You can also be adventurous and explore other citrus options, which will make a different impact on the nose and palate. Consider orange, lime or grapefruit peel, if for example you are using a gin which is made with fresh botanicals of grapefruit, lime and orange.

If you prefer the more savoury notes of an olive, look for green olives with stones, marinated in brine rather than olive oil or with herbs added. These flavours won't sit well on the palate so you would need to wash the olives very well before using them.

You can simply spear an olive on a cocktail pick and add it straight into the cocktail as a decoration, but if you want it to contribute to the drink, spike it in three places first, to allow a little of the juice to come out into the Martini.

- Keep vermouth in the fridge once opened (whether a single bottle or a blend you have made) to preserve the freshness and quality. The same goes for sweet vermouth, which we will use in other recipes. Give it a regular taste here and then to check its status.

THE DIRTY MARTINI

We have mentioned olives in brine for a garnish, but you can also use the brine itself to add to the spirits and vermouth and make what we call a Dirty Martini, which has sharper, more savoury notes. There is also a Filthy Martini, which involves muddling olives in the mixing glass before mixing, then double-straining the drink as you pour it into the Martini glass, to remove any bits of olive – but personally I prefer a Dirty Martini, made with just a tiny amount of brine. For this Martini I suggest using vodka instead of gin.

THE GLASS:

Martini or cocktail glass

THE INGREDIENTS:

15ml vermouth
15ml green olive brine
75ml vodka
single olive, pricked in three places, for garnish

THE METHOD:

Fill a mixing glass with ice. Add the vermouth, brine and vodka and stir.

Spear the pricked olive on a cocktail pick, place in the chilled glass and strain the cocktail over the top.

- Do not use olives preserved in olive oils or with herbs.
- Always taste the olive brine to make sure it is not too salty.

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04. VESPER MARTINI

Now for the shaken Martini cocktail, of which the most iconic is the Vesper. In Ian Fleming's novel, *Casino Royale* (1953), he decided that James Bond should order this fantastic concoction, which he named after the double agent Vesper Lynd – although it wasn't until the later book, *Diamonds Are Forever* that the Bond character first mentioned the famous instruction, 'shaken, not stirred'.

> IT IS NOT JUST A DRINK.
> IT IS ABOUT HOLDING THE BEAUTIFUL V-SHAPED GLASS BY THE STEM, FEELING AS THOUGH YOU ARE IN A JAMES BOND MOVIE.

The original Vesper cocktail called for three parts gin to one of vodka, with half a part of Kina Lillet, a French aromatised wine which included quinine to add the bitter note, with lemon peel for garnish. Kina Lillet is no longer made – it was replaced by Lillet Blanc, made to a different recipe – so this is my version in which I use a quinine-flavoured aperitif wine to give the bitter element.

For this I use a three-piece shaker. The recipe is for one cocktail, but you can make 1-2 Martinis in the same shaker, or you could use a two-piece shaker if you want to make a longer drink, or more than two.

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THE GLASS:

Martini or cocktail glass

THE INGREDIENTS:

40ml London Dry gin
20ml vodka
10ml Cocchi Americano
unwaxed organic orange, for garnish

THE METHOD:

Place one big chunk of ice or some smaller ones into the shaker, stir briefly and strain off any excess water. Add the gin, vodka and Americano vermouth.

Holding the shaker at shoulder height, with one hand on the top and the other on the bottom, shake vigorously so that the ice moves around from the top to the bottom, mixing the ingredients. Shake for about 15-20 seconds. You will see the shaker becoming frosted.

Even though the three-part shaker has a built-in strainer I like to double strain the cocktail through a fine sieve into the chilled glass. This will remove any little pieces of ice, but there is a school of thought that likes to leave these in. It is entirely down to your preference.

FOR THE GARNISH:

Peel a long strip of orange zest, taking as little of the white pith as possible, and, if you like, use a small kitchen cutter to cut out a round shape. Take the rest of the strip and squeeze it from a height above the glass, so that some of the essential oil spritzes around the surface, then with your tweezers, garnish the cocktail with the circle of peel. Size the peel according to the size and shape of your glass for extra harmony.

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05. THE MANHATTAN

It was around the 1860s when the Manhattan first appeared to become what is still considered the first modern cocktail, due to the inclusion of sweet vermouth in what would have otherwise been an Old Fashioned.

Unlike the Martini, which has seen the proportions of its ingredients constantly change and evolve, the Manhattan has largely kept to the essential structure of two parts whisky to one part of sweet vermouth, with dashes of aromatic bitters. Sugar acts to soften the spirit, reduce the heat of the alcohol, and create mouthfeel, while bringing out the whisky's subtler aspects. A couple of dashes of bitters accentuate its notes of oak.

However, as always, once you know the DNA of the classic cocktail and understand the interaction of spirit and sweet and bitter agents, you might want to adjust the ratio to suit your own taste.

You can use a classic rye whisky or a bourbon, although which to use can be a divisive point!

Rye whisky is characteristically a little more bold, spicy, peppery and sharp, with notes of oak, fruit, and smoke thanks to at least 51 per cent rye in the mash. It is often considered the traditional choice and is said by some to have been the preferred whisky of New Yorkers around the time of the cocktail's creation. Bourbon has at least 51 per cent corn in the mash, and while each house has its own recipe, a bourbon whisky will typically be a touch sweeter with more notes of vanilla, caramel, fruitiness and oak. For this recipe, I am going to use half rye and half bourbon, in order to integrate the aromas and flavours of both styles.

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Classically the Manhattan is served with a cocktail cherry, but I like to use orange peel also. You can buy cocktail cherries in syrup, or also **marinate them yourself in spirit**. Or you could even marinade your cherries in a jar with the cocktail itself. Imagine biting into a Manhattan-marinaded cherry before going to bed – how relaxing and soothing!

THE GLASS:

Cocktail coupe

THE INGREDIENTS:

20ml bourbon
20ml rye whisky
25ml sweet vermouth
2-3 dashes of aromatic bitters
unwaxed organic orange and/or cocktail cherries for garnish

THE METHOD:

Fill a mixing glass with ice.

Add the bourbon, whisky and vermouth and then the bitters and stir. Taste to check the balance of flavours.

Start to strain the cocktail into the chilled coupe, raising your hand as you go, so that the liquid descends in a thin stream, which will allow the flavours and aromas to expand and help to create a velvety texture on the palate.

FOR THE GARNISH:

I suggest two options. The first is to peel a strip of orange peel, taking as little of the white pith as possible, then with a paring knife neaten the long edges and cut the ends on the diagonal. Roll up and twist the peel and then add to the glass with your tweezers. Serve the cherries in a small bowl on the side, so that your friends can take a bite of cherry and then a sip of the cocktail.

Alternatively add a cherry to the glass, speared on a cocktail pick, and squeeze your strip of orange peel over the glass from a height, just to release some of the oil into the glass, and then discard it.

VARIATIONS:

You could experiment with a different spirit, such as cognac, or an aged tequila. Vermouth is wine based, so you could also explore substituting other fortified wine drinks, such as port, sherry or Marsala.

- Remember to keep the vermouth in the fridge once opened.



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06. RISTRETTO MANHATTAN

Being Italian, a few years ago I created my own version of the Manhattan, which has the pick-me-up properties of the ristretto – a small shot of espresso – in this case from coffee liqueur. I add a little blackberry Crème de Mûre to give the velvety fruity notes which make the drink even more rounded. I suggest 2.5ml, but if you prefer a slightly sweeter drink, you could add a touch more. The vermouth is Punt e Mes, whose name means 'point and a half', which refers to the flavour profile of one part bitterness and half a part of sweetness. At the Connaught we make this cocktail just with bourbon but as this is a special **BBC Maestro** cocktail, I am staying with half rye whisky and half bourbon.

> ADDING THE GARNISH IS A GESTURE IN ITSELF, PART OF THE SHOW.

There are many coffee liqueurs out there but try to buy one which has 'coffee', not 'coffee aromas' or similar on the label, because you want to have the bitter dry notes that come from real coffee, not just the aromatics.



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THE GLASS:

Cocktail coupe or wide wine glass

THE INGREDIENTS:

2-3 dashes aromatic bitters
20ml Punt e Mes vermouth
About 10ml coffee liqueur
2.5ml Crème de Mûre liqueur
20ml bourbon
20ml rye whisky
organic, unwaxed orange for garnish

THE METHOD:

Fill a mixing glass with ice.

Add the bitters first, then the vermouth, coffee liqueur, Crème de Mûre liqueur, bourbon and whisky and stir.

Classically stirred cocktails such as this are served 'straight up', i.e. with no ice, but I like to add a little chunk of ice to the glass, as this is a drink you might want to enjoy more slowly and so you need to maintain the temperature.

Strain the cocktail into the chilled glass over the ice.

> THE SOUND THE ICE CREATES AS IT TRAVELS AROUND THE SHAKER IS THE MUSIC OF A GOOD COCKTAIL BAR!

FOR THE GARNISH:

For this cocktail we are staying with orange peel for the garnish, but this time, to be a little different, I suggest cutting the peel into a 'z' shape. Cut a strip of peel with your peeler as before and, if you would like some more orange aroma in your cocktail, gently squeeze it over the glass from a height first to release some of the essential oil.

Now trim the long edges of the strip of peel and cut each end to form a diamond shape.

With the long edges facing you, take a paring knife and cut from the left-hand point into the middle and stop. Move the knife down a little and cut again, this time from the middle to the opposite point. When you open out the peel you will have a 'z' shape. Either place your orange peel 'z' on the top of the drink or hang it on the side of the glass.

07. NEGRONI

Now we are going to explore the most Italian of classic cocktails. Considered to be one of the most elegant and iconic of drinks, with over 100 years of history. Over the last decade or two the Negroni has experienced a huge surge of popularity, following a renewed taste for bitter flavours, and a widespread love of the Italian lifestyle and ingredients all over the world.

The DNA of the Negroni is just three ingredients: gin, Campari and sweet vermouth, but the recipe also offers a fantastic base and canvas for different interpretations.

According to one story the cocktail was born in Florence in 1919 at the Caffè Casoni when the Count Camillo Negroni made a special request of the bartender, Fosco Scarselli. At the time the popular cocktail was the Americano, which took its name from American visitors to the bar who liked a long, light drink with soda water added to the classic aperitif, Milano Torino, made with Campari from Milan and a vermouth from Turin in equal parts. Count Negroni travelled the world and came to London for business quite often, where he found a spirit that was close to his heart as it contained the flavour notes of his native Tuscany: juniper, citrus, and botanicals. That spirit was gin. So when the Count went back to his favourite bar he asked for an Americano cocktail, but with gin instead of the soda water.

In the previous lesson we saw that in a Manhattan the vermouth element plays a supportive role to the main spirits, but in the Negroni the three ingredients are usually in equal parts, blending together to create a new taste profile.

Again however, much depends on the style of gin (which can vary from London Dry to a spirit with a fresh, citrusy character) as well as the vermouth and bitters you choose, so you may want to adjust the balance according to your taste.

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THE GLASS:

Rocks glass

THE INGREDIENTS:

30ml gin
30ml Campari
30ml sweet vermouth
organic, unwaxed orange, for garnish

THE METHOD:

Fill a mixing glass with ice. Add the gin, Campari and sweet vermouth, and stir gently and quickly.

The Negroni is traditionally served on the rocks, so fill the chilled glass with large chunks of ice before pouring the stirred cocktail over the top.

FOR THE GARNISH:

The vibrant colour of this cocktail is beautiful on its own but a classic orange wedge can enhance it. Use your tweezers to place this gently, peel side downwards, on top of the cocktail.

VARIATIONS:

Instead of Campari you could experiment with other Italian bitter liqueurs, such as Galliano, packed with citrus and floral notes, or some of the newer styles that have been created to keep up with the surge in fashionability of the Negroni.

The cocktail has its own extended family. If you use vodka instead of gin it becomes a Negroski. If you substitute bourbon it is a Boulevardier, or if you travel to Mexico you might find the Rosita, made with tequila and a blend of sweet and dry vermouth. If you are experimenting, consider something more fresh for an aperitif or more structured if you want a drink for later in the evening.

- Taste your trio of bitter, vermouth and gin to check their individual intensity and tweak the measures according to this or to your taste.
- Don't overdilute the Negroni while stirring or it will lose its silky texture which is key.
- Don't cut the orange wedge too far in advance or it will lose its fresh aspect.

ONE OF THE MOST ELEGANT AND ICONIC OF DRINKS, WITH OVER 100 YEARS OF HISTORY.

NEGRONI DEL DR AGO

As I mentioned before, my nickname is Dr Ago, and this Negroni is made with my own personal touch, which is adding a float of mezcal, a Mexican spirit produced from agave, like tequila. Mezcal can be made from many different agave plants, whereas tequila is made only from the blue agave. Use a mezcal that is not particularly intense in flavour or smoky not to overpower the mix – e.g. Vida Mezcal, Derrumbes Michoacan, Ilegal.

Adding a mezcal float is different to making a mezcal Negroni in which mezcal replaces the gin. I keep the essential structure of the cocktail – the freshness of gin, with the sweet and bitter marriage of Campari and vermouth (as in the recipe above), but at the end I add a new layer of flavour and body by pouring 10ml of mezcal over the top of the cocktail. I also spray a little orange essential oil, diluted in alcohol, over and around the glass, which gives a fantastic orchard aroma, so as you approach the cocktail you meet the aromatics of the orange, and then at the first sip you begin to experience the different layers of flavour.





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CHOCOLATE NEGRONI

Now we are going to take the Negroni up another level or two. Who doesn't love chocolate?

In this recipe I also want to introduce you to the idea of 'pre-batching' i.e. making up a cocktail in advance to store in the fridge in advance of entertaining a large number of guests.

So the first part of the recipe simply involves mixing a larger quantity of gin, Campari and vermouth in equal parts. Now you have a classic Negroni, which you can store in a sterilised jar or bottle in the fridge for up to one month. It will actually keep for several months, but after about four weeks the flavour will tend to settle and become softer. It will need to be diluted before serving, so just pour it into a mixing glass filled with ice and stir gently before serving on the rocks, as in the classic recipe above. Alternatively you can dilute your pre-mix before storing in the fridge. When a cocktail is shaken or stirred the dilution from the ice is around 30 per cent of the total liquid, so you can add the equivalent in water into the pre-batch instead. For this recipe that would be 130ml water, although ultimately the amount of dilution is up to you and how you like to taste the drink.

You need a measuring jug or scales and a sterilised bottle or jar.

THE GLASS:

Rocks glass

THE INGREDIENTS FOR PRE-BATCH COCKTAIL (SERVES 5):

150ml gin
150ml Campari
150ml vermouth
30g cacao nibs
1 drop Absolute essential oil of bergamot

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THE METHOD:

Blend the gin, Campari and vermout together in a jar or container suitable in size for the quantitites. Then, add the cocoa nibs to infuse and just one drop of essential oil and stir gently. Strain the mix into a sterilised jar or bottle and store out of direct light, at room temperature for around 24 hours.

Strain through a fine sieve into a clean jug, and then further filter it by pouring through a funnel into a sterilised bottle, adding a dilution of 150ml water. Label and keep in the fridge. Although it can stay in the fridge for a few months, I suggest you use it within two weeks, as after this time the flavour will soften.

Pour 120ml of liquid for each portion over ice in the glass to serve your guests.

VARIATIONS:

You could experiment with coffee beans, dried fruit stone fruit or nuts in place of the cocoa nibs, or try fresh herbs like basil, rosemary, thyme, or fresh peel – when adding fresh botanicals like these, I suggest you taste the mix around every three hours or so until you have the flavour profile you like.

Tea is another great option. Try English breakfast, or Earl Grey (which is packed with Bergamot), Lapsang Suchong (which is smoky) or Milk Oolong, with its aroma of milk, which is quite amazing. You can add the leaves directly, or make some cold tea and use it as a dilution (for more on using tea as an infusion **see Lesson 13 on sodas**).

You could also play with different essential oils such as basil, aniseed, citrus or pine needles. Remember, though, that one drop only of pure Absolute essential oil is enough for the magic to happen.

08. OLD FASHIONED



Considered like the original cocktail, initially referred to as the Whisky cocktail, with its components of whisky, sugar, bitters and water. The Old Fashioned became popular in America although its roots are highly debated and likely way more ancient.

As much as the spirit is the main protagonist, the bitters are also important. The exact origin of the drink is debated, but as mentioned earlier, bitters were originally seen as curatives when Richard Stoughton first created them in the UK, and they were often used to combat the sickness that could be encountered as people travelled by boat around the world. They were good for you, but alone didn't taste so pleasant, so they were often mixed with spirits. Across Britain and the colonies they were most likely mixed with gin or brandy and sweet wine, while in America they were incorporated into a drink with whisky and sugar, which became known as the Whisky Cocktail, and later the Old Fashioned, to set it apart from newer variations with more or different ingredients.

So, the DNA of the cocktail is simply whisky, elevated with bitters, which add more depth and aroma, and sugar to bind everything together.

Instead of sugar, we mix it with sugar syrup which you can buy, or **make your own**. I have suggested just 10ml, but after mixing and tasting you can always add a little more. The same goes for the bitters. I suggest three drops, but you might want to add another after tasting. The idea is to honour and elevate the spirit – in this case bourbon – by adding more depth and aroma, but not overwhelm it.

This is a stirred cocktail, because we want the ingredients to blend with a little extra dilution. It is a good after-meal drink, but if made with a spicier spirit, such as rye whisky, it can also be good as an aperitif.

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THE GLASS:

Rocks glass or a whisky/Old Fashioned tumbler

THE INGREDIENTS:

50ml bourbon
2-3 drops of Angostura or other aromatic bitters
10ml **Sugar syrup**
organic, unwaxed orange, for garnish

THE METHOD:

Fill a mixing glass with ice.

Add the bourbon, bitters and sugar syrup, and stir with your bar spoon for about 45 seconds, then taste, to check the temperature, dilution and flavour. You can either transfer some ice from the mixing glass into your chilled tumbler, or put in some fresh cubes. One large chunk of fresh ice which fits snugly in the glass can look very impressive.

Strain the cocktail into the chilled glass.

FOR THE GARNISH:

For a horse's neck, peel around the diameter of the orange and make a longer twist, which you can place between the glass and the ice.

To make a dragon neck, use a tomato knife to trim along the long edges in a curvy fashion then make a series of diagonal slits along each edge. The peel will open out into spikes.

As always, before you carve the peel you can squeeze it gently from a height into the glass, to release a few drops of essential oil and enhance the aroma.

VARIATIONS:

You could use cognac, aged tequila, Armagnac, or rum instead of the bourbon.

- Go easy on the sugar syrup and start with a small quantity. You can always add more, but you can't take away, and you don't want to end up with a drink that is too sweet.
- Chill your mixing glass before adding the ingredients by stirring just ice and removing the excess water before adding the ingredients.
- Take the time to enjoy one sip and let the drink rest to develop its full flavour.

09. BUTTER NOISETTE TEQUILA OLD FASHIONED

This is a take on the Old Fashioned, this time made with flavoured aged tequila, which can be pre-batched (i.e. made up in advance). For this recipe I am also going to introduce you to an infusion using a fat wash method to flavour our aged tequila. I will explain more about this concept in the next lesson but essentially a fat wash is a way of introducing a new flavour and texture into a cocktail, by combining a fat, butter or oil with a spirit, then freezing it until the fat solidifies and can be removed, leaving behind the alcohol infused with its flavour.

In this case our fat is butter, which is melted in a pan until it takes on a hazelnut colour and aroma. This is what chefs call *beurre noisette*. It is then integrated with aged tequila, as the woodiness of the tequila goes well with the sweetness of the caramelised butter.

The cocktail is quite rich, so I suggest you serve just a small quantity, around 20ml in a liqueur glass as an aperitif or after-dinner drink. If you wish to enjoy or serve a full portion, consider 80 or 90ml measure served over ice in a chilled Rocks glass.



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> A FAT WASH IS A WAY OF INTRODUCING A NEW FLAVOUR AND TEXTURE INTO A COCKTAIL.

THE GLASS:

Small liqueur glasses

THE INGREDIENTS:

This will make a pre-batch which is enough for 10 cocktails. (If you want to make an individual drink, just divide the quantities by ten, i.e. 50ml tequila, 2 drops of bitters and 10ml of sugar syrup and stir in a mixing glass with ice before serving in a chilled glass).

As mentioned previously, when you pre-batch cocktails, you have the option of stirring over ice, as above, before serving, in order to give the necessary dilution, or alternatively you can add an equivalent amount of water to the mix before storing in the fridge. As a guide, the amount of dilution either from water or ice should be around 30 per cent of the total liquid, so in this case we are going to add 200ml of water.

500ml filtered aged (Añejo) tequila butter noisette fat wash
20 drops of aromatic bitters
100ml **sugar syrup**
200ml water

THE METHOD:

Pour the filtered fat wash into a container or large jar, add the bitters, sugar syrup and water, stir, then strain into a sterilised bottle and store in the fridge for up to one month.

Serve in small, chilled glasses, and finish, if you like, with a squeeze of orange peel from a height, or alternatively spray a little orange essential oil around the glass.

OPTIONAL:

A strip of organic, unwaxed orange peel or essential orange oil, diluted in alcohol, to finish.

- Make sure the sugar is properly dissolved and mixed with the rest of the ingredients.
- Let the drink rest and sip it gently as the flavour of the cocktail tends to develop with a bit of time.
- Don't store for too long before serving. Remember that the sugar and bitters in a pre-batch cocktail tend to intensify with time adding sweetness and bitterness. Try over hours/days to adjust to your taste.

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10. FAT WASH

A fat wash is a technique for introducing flavour to spirits, using fatty ingredients, such as butter, coconut oil or olive oil. The king of the fats is butter, which can be caramelised in a pan and then its sweet aromas and flavours infused into dark spirits such as aged tequila, bourbon and cognac. The fat wash I am going to explain here is made with aged tequila, which is used to make the Butter Noisette Tequila Old Fashioned in the previous lesson.

The percentage of fat to liquid should be 7 per cent.

THE INGREDIENTS:

35g good quality yellow unsalted butter
700ml aged tequila

THE METHOD:

Melt the butter gently in a pan on the hob, then turn up the heat a little and keep stirring until it turns hazelnut brown. Take off the heat, pour into a container suitable for freezing and add the aged tequila. (If you like, you could further infuse the liquid with spices such as cloves or cinnamon, or even citrus peel. The general rule of infusion, i.e. the higher the temperature the faster the flavours are extracted, so if you want a softer infusion allow the liquid to cool before adding spices etc).

Seal and allow to cool. As the mixture cools, the fat will infuse its flavour into the spirit and vice versa. Put into the freezer for 24 hours until you end up with a thin layer of solidified butter on top, which you can lift out with your tongs, along with any smaller pieces (you can keep this flavoured butter to use in cooking).

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The fat wash will be quite cloudy, so it needs to be filtered. Ideally use a V60 coffee filter and paper to do this. Pour the fat wash into a jug and then pour it into the filter slowly, a little at a time, to allow it to drip through in its own time. The finished liquid will have a velvety viscosity. Transfer to a sterilised jar or bottle, label it and put in the fridge. It will keep for up to one month.

COCONUT & DARK RUM FAT WASH

THE INGREDIENTS:

20g organic coconut oil
700ml dark rum

THE METHOD:

Melt the coconut oil gently in a pan, take off the heat and combine with the rum in a freezer container. Seal and leave to rest for 1 hour, then put into the freezer for 24 hours. Filter through a V60 coffee filter and transfer to a sterilised bottle. Label and keep in the fridge for up to one month.

OLIVE OIL & VODKA FAT WASH

THE INGREDIENTS:

35g extra virgin olive oil
700ml vodka

THE METHOD:

Combine and mix well the oil and vodka in the container and let the mix sit for one hour, then put in the freezer for 24 hours. Filter through a V60 coffee filter and transfer to a sterilised bottle. Label and keep in the fridge for up to one month.

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11. WHISKY SOUR

And so we move on to the Sour category of cocktails, broadly defined as a combination of spirit, a citrus or sour element, and sugar, and therefore extends to popular drinks such as the Pisco Sour, Daiquiri, Gimlet, Mojito, and even the Margarita. However, the most famous is the Whisky Sour, the refreshing grandfather of this big family of cocktails.

The first official mention of the Whisky Sour was in Jerry Thomas' *Bartenders' Guide* (1862), who inspired generations of bartenders for years to come. However, the use of citrusses in spirits mixes can be traced way back. Whisky, rum and other spirits were commonly used by sailors on long voyages and citrusses were used to heal scurvy, lack of vitamin C. Once these mixes made it onto the shores of the United States, it didn't take long until the Whisky Sour became a popular cocktail found in bars.

Over the years the classic cocktail evolved to consist of whisky, lemon juice and sugar syrup, with or without the addition of egg white. This gives a silky texture, but too much can be unpleasant in terms of taste and particularly aroma. We are going to use it in this recipe, but just 20ml. As an alternative, if you like the idea of the texture, but prefer not to use egg, you can use Ms. Better's Miraculous Foamer Bitters, a vegan combination of natural ingredients in alcohol which helps the protein to solidify without adding any flavour, and when you shake the cocktail it will create a foamy texture.

This recipe is shaken not stirred, using a two-part shaker for the first time in this course. This is the one we use for cocktails which have a little more volume and need a little more energy and strength in the agitating motion to bring all the ingredients together.

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As I mentioned previously, be sure to squeeze the lemon just before you add it to the shaker so that it is as fresh as possible and also be careful not to press too hard towards the end when using a juicer to avoid the bitterness in the white pith.

For this recipe I use a blended scotch whisky, which has a good balance of spiciness, fruitiness, soft aroma and depth, but whisky is a huge category, so look for one which has the particular nuances that you like.

THE GLASS:

Rocks glass or a whisky/Old Fashioned or Sour glass

THE INGREDIENTS:

50ml blended scotch whisky
20ml sugar syrup (to start with)
30ml freshly squeezed lemon juice
20ml egg white
4 dashes of Angostura bitters

THE METHOD:

Fill in the large tin of your shaker with ice cubes or one big chunk to chill it. Take the small tin and add whisky, sugar syrup, lemon juice and bitters. The egg white, the most delicate of ingredients, will be added after the rest.

Strain off any excess water from the ice in the large tin, if any, then pour the ingredients from the smaller tin and place it on top, tapping it gently to seal the two parts together so that they align on one side. Don't hammer the two parts hard together, or they might get stuck!

Place the thumb of one hand on top of the shaker, with the other underneath, then raise up to shoulder level and shake.

Twist off the top tin (you might need to give it a tap).

Taste to see if you have the right balance of flavours. Remember that the taste of lemons changes all the time.

Either serve the cocktail straight up or on the rocks. If the latter, put two chunks of ice into your chilled glass – maybe one large and one small – and double-strain the drink over the top.

VARIATIONS:

THE NEW YORK SOUR

One of the many variations of the Whisky Sour emerged towards the end of the 1800s by adding a red wine float to the cocktail. A similar version, including the addition of egg white, is known as Boston Sour for example. To add an extra touch of personalisation, I recommend trying Porto wine infused with figs. This is made simply by adding 300g of dried figs and a vanilla pod to a bottle of port and leaving it for 24 hours to infuse before keeping in the fridge for up to two weeks. Pour 10-15ml gently over your bar spoon onto the cocktail, add a drop of Angostura bitters and stir a little with the end of your spoon.

Or you could use a nut or fruit liqueur, instead of the infused port, to give another dimension of flavour.



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You could also experiment with a Japanese whisky or another dark spirit. Any spirit mixed with citrus and sugar can become a ‘sour’, so you can have a vodka sour, gin sour, tequila sour, and so on.

Try orange or grapefruit juice instead of lemon, or even the juice of more exotic fruits such as kaffir lime or yuzu. Or make a blend, say of lime and lemon, or lime and grapefruit, according to the taste profile you want to create and the spirit you use.

The sugar syrup could be vanilla based, or you could add fresh herbs. There’s plenty of creative avenues to explore in order to find your own signature sour cocktail.

- Squeeze the lemon at the last minute, so that the juice doesn’t begin to oxidise, changing its aroma and flavour.
- Don't add too much egg white or sugar.
- Shake the cocktail immediatly after adding the egg white and pouring the ingredients into the big tin or the egg will ‘cook’ and affect the flavour.



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12. PISCO COLLINS

The Collins category of cocktails is an extension of the Sour family, but in the form of a long drink, with soda water. As always in the world of cocktails the history of the Collins is disputed, but it is thought to have originated with the Tom and John Collins, two cocktails featuring gin as base spirit but of different types. The classic Tom Collins recipe calls for gin, fresh lemon juice, sugar syrup and soda, however there are many siblings and relatives emerged for the replacement of gin with another spirit.

The Pisco Collins is one of my favourites of this vast family, made with Pisco. Pisco is made by distilling grape juice into a high-proof spirit in Peru and Chile, using different grape varieties so this is a category to explore in order to find your favourite flavour profile.

For this recipe I use a blend of lemon juice and lime juice in equal parts, which of course you can adjust as you prefer, and I also use Ms. Better's Miraculous Foamer Bitters, which I mentioned in the Whisky Sour recipe.

For this cocktail I also use a flavoured soda water which is infused with chrysanthemum flowers. Of course, you can buy many flavoured and aromatic soda waters, but homemade is always the best. As I always say, inspiration is everywhere, and in this case mine came from Shanghai, where I visited the tea market. It was full of amazing kinds of teas, but also there was a flower section where I spotted a jar of dehydrated chrysanthemum flowers.

I asked if I could smell the flowers and when I closed my eyes and took in the exciting aromas, I was reminded of acacia honey, so I thought I could use the flowers to create a flavoured soda water which I want to share with you for this Collins cocktail.

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THE GLASS:

Collins glass

THE INGREDIENTS:

50ml pisco
25ml equal parts freshly squeezed lemon and lime juice
20ml sugar syrup
around 4 drops Miraculous Foamer
50ml **chrysanthemum-flavoured soda water**
dried fruit for garnish
Angostura bitter spray, to finish

THE METHOD:

Add a large chunk and smaller pieces of ice to your shaker, then the Pisco, citrus juice, sugar syrup and Miraculous Foamer, and shake.

Stack your chilled serving glass with ice cubes, put in your bar spoon and gently pour in the chrysanthemum flavoured soda water (pouring over the spoon helps to keep the effervescence). Now double-strain the cocktail from the shaker over the top. As this has a different weight to the soda water it will sink, whereas if you put the soda water in last, you will need to stir it in and, again, you will lose some of the carbonation in the process. Lift out the spoon gently.

I suggest you serve long drinks with a stirrer, should the ingredients begin to separate after a few minutes.

> “ICE IS PROBABLY THE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN THE COCKTAIL PUZZLE.

FOR THE GARNISH:

For the dried fruit decoration choose ingredients which echo those in the cocktail, such as lime or pineapple. You can buy all kinds of dried fruit or dry your own fruit in the oven or dehydrator, if you have one. I like to garnish this cocktail with a thin slice of dried pineapple and a dried chrysanthemum flower, placed on top.

You can also finish by spraying some Angostura bitters around the cocktail so that you experience the aromas, without the bitters going inside the drink, which would ruin the foam.

13. SODAS

You can buy many different flavoured soda waters, but I would like to encourage you to make your own, which can be enjoyed just as they are, as a refreshing non-alcoholic drink, or incorporated into your cocktail making, when you want a longer drink.

Once you know the basic principle of infusing botanicals in water, a whole world of exciting options opens up as you begin to experiment with flowers, fruits and spices – and if you add aromatic or flavoured bitters you can create a tonic-style water.

I love Earl Grey tea, which gives a fresh aromatic burst of bergamot and citrus, but you could try whole spices, such as cinnamon, cloves or vanilla, aromatic cacao nibs or cacao husks, which are the outer covering of the nibs and are a little more sharp and acidic (though they may be more difficult to find).

The golden rule is 5g of dry ingredients to 500ml of water.

Next think about temperature. If you infuse your ingredients in water which is at room temperature, the aromas and flavours will be extracted quite slowly and softly, giving you high notes and lighter notes, but without the bitterness that might be in the botanicals. The hotter the water, the faster you will extract the flavours and aromas (think of making tea) and any bitterness, woodiness or tannin in the botanicals will come through. So, bear this in mind when you try different infusions.

As well as the temperature of your infusion, be mindful of the colour of your ingredients, especially if you are going to use the soda water in a cocktail.

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Remember the look of your drink is very important! The recipe I am giving here is for a Chrysanthemum-flavoured soda (as used in the Pisco Collins recipe in the previous lesson) in which the flowers, which are infused softly in water at room temperature, produce a delicate pale-coloured liquid. An infusion of Earl Grey tea might be a bright amber while cocoa husk will produce a rich brown colour.

As I always say, inspiration can come from anywhere, from travelling and seeing the way ingredients are used in different cultures, or from exploring markets and speciality tea or spice shops. When I first discovered dried chrysanthemum flowers in an Asian tea market, I immediately imagined the floral, honey and pollen notes that this could bring to soda water.

You will need some scales, and a measured jug or jar with a lid in which to allow your preparation to infuse. Or, if you want to save space you can seal your preparation in a vacuum bag. Finally you need a SodaStream to add the burst of bubbles that will turn your infusion into a soda water. Carbonate again after each use.

CHRYSANTHEMUM FLAVOURED SODA WATER

THE INGREDIENTS:

5g dried chrysanthemum flowers
500ml water (at room temperature)

THE METHOD:

Put the flowers into your jug or jar, add the water and stir briefly. Close the lid and leave at room temperature for around 24 hours and then store in the fridge. Taste every so often to sample the way different flavours emerge throughout the process.

Now you need to filter the liquid. You can do this using a V60 filter and paper, or a superbag. Don't discard the flowers, which will have begun to open in the water, as you could de-hydrate them to use as a garnish, or once dry, blitz into a powder to dust the outside of a glass, such as in my **Festive Cocktail Trio**.

Pour the clear, filtered liquid into a SodaStream bottle and chill in the fridge for a few hours, before carbonating with the SodaStream, then return to the fridge. The soda will keep for 7 days, after which time it will lose the delicacy of flavours.

VARIATION:

The ratio I have given above can be varied to give a more concentrated version. Instead of 5g of botanicals to 500ml of water, increase the quantity of botanicals to 25g. Then when you serve it, you can just use 10ml of this concentrate diluted with 50ml plain soda water.

INFUSING SPIRITS

You can apply the same principles above (except for the final carbonation) to infusing spirits for your cocktails. Alcohol is a solvent, so it extracts the flavour of whatever ingredients you put into it. Another rule here is, the higher the alcohol by volume (ABV) the faster you will extract the flavours and aromas, so you will have more bitter, tannic and woody notes. The lower the ABV, the slower and longer infusion, which will give a different softer style. Examples of infused spirits we have used in this course are the fig and vanilla infused port in the New York Sour Version of the **Whisky Sour** and the pine-infused vodka in the Festive Trio of Cocktails. As a general rule when you infuse high-proof spirits these don't need to be kept in the fridge, whereas wine-based spirits do.



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14. ICE

Ice is probably the most important element in the cocktail puzzle. Not only does it make the drinks cold, but it brings ingredients together with the right amount of dilution and helps create an elegant, silky texture to your cocktail which will make it more enjoyable on the palate. In cocktails served on the rocks it contributes to the visual appeal of the drink, and so quality and clarity is paramount.

The history of ice making in cocktails goes back centuries. In the 1800s ice merchants would deliver huge blocks of pure clear ice across the world, but with the advent of refrigeration everyone could make their own ice at home in moulds or containers. However, the ice cubes these produce tend to have clear sides but a cloudy centre, which will crack easily and melt too quickly. The reason for this is that water freezes from the outside in, and as it presses into the middle this causes cloudiness.

It is becoming increasingly possible to buy good quality blocks, cubes and other shapes of ice from specialist shops or online, however if you want to make your own clear ice at home I suggest you invest in a cooler which is insulated on all sides, in which you can make whole blocks of ice.

There are many myths about which water to use, and whether it should be boiled or distilled. My view is that normal still bottled water does the job perfectly. It is the speed of freezing, i.e. slowly, that makes the difference. When you fill your cooler with water (and store it in the freezer without lid), as in a lake the freezing process starts at the top and the first thin layer of ice becomes thicker and thicker, pushing downwards under its weight, so this time the cloudy layer will be at the bottom.

> “ICE IS TO THE BARTENDER WHAT FIRE IS TO A CHEF.

Once frozen, pour away any water in the container and leave at room temperature for about 30 minutes. At first the top of the ice will appear frosted, but will become clear and soften a little, so it is easier to turn out of the container onto a chopping board, and then cut with your ice machete or knife.

If you can’t fit a cooler into your freezer you can buy smaller, insulated boxes, sometimes with silicone inner moulds, which make larger cubes. You can also buy moulds for making spheres and many other shapes which will enhance the look of your cocktails.

15. MARGARITA

If there is one classic sour cocktail that truly captures the heart and imagination, it is the Margarita, probably the most requested cocktail on the planet at the moment. It is a drink that can't stop swirling around the tastebuds. There are many variations and interpretations, and although the recipe is simple it is one of the most complicated in terms of nailing the perfect balance of flavours.

As always, before you begin to experiment you need to understand the DNA of the cocktail, which is all about the complex green, herbaceous and zesty flavours of tequila, freshly squeezed lime juice, which gives the sour element, and Triple Sec orange liqueur for sweetness. Some people prefer Cointreau or Grand Marnier as orange liqueur vary according to preferences, however freshly squeezed lime juice, with its distinctive zestiness, is non-negotiable. This is traditionally a shaken cocktail because you want the ice not only to chill, but to blend and aerate the ingredients and enhance the vibrant sharpness of the lime juice.

The exact origin of the cocktail is the subject of many myths and stories in North America, with the first recorded appearance of the recipe in the 1950s. Whatever the truth, at the heart of the Margarita is a wonderful Mexican spirit, tequila. A category that is as big as beautifully varied, ranging from blancos to reposados (aged), ańejo (further aged), extra ańejo and other varieties too. Each of these has its own characteristic and personality, but all deliver the flavour of the Weber Blue Agave plant which takes years to grow, depending on soil and other factors, for an average of seven years to reach the right maturity for harvest and then being cooked, fermented and distilled. The particular one I am using for this recipe is a blanco from the Highlands of Jalisco, one of the main tequila producing regions in Mexico.

Once you've chosen your favourite tequila, the big question is, do you like your margarita straight up, on the rocks, with salt or without salt? The final touches on the glass can make a big difference.

Lime and salt is a combination which is part of the food and drink culture of Mexico. Wherever you go, if you order a tequila, a beer or a non-alcoholic drink, there will usually be lime and salt on the side, salt being a natural electrolyte to help you in the heat. My wife Gaby, who on top of being a professional agave spirits expert is Mexican, is a great Margarita connoisseur and aficionada. She loves sharp flavours and even sprinkles some extra salt into the glass of the cocktail. So for this recipe, we are going to serve the Margarita, straight up, with a salt rim (you could also use chilli salt for a spicy Margarita, ot another flavoured salt that suits your taste and mood.)

THE GLASS:

Cocktail coupe

THE INGREDIENTS:

50ml blanco tequila
25ml freshly squeezed lime juice
25ml orange liqueur
sea salt, e.g. Maldon salt, for glass rim

THE METHOD:

Have ready a small bowl of sea salt and a lime for preparing your glass.

Fill the small tin of a two-pieces shaker with ice. Add the tequila to the large tin, followed by the lime juice and orange liqueur.

Salt the rim of your chilled glass before shaking the cocktail. Halve the lime, tilt the glass at 45 degrees and turn the rim over the surface of the fruit. Then, holding the glass at the same angle, dip the rim into the salt and turn it to coat the rim all the way around (or just halfway if you prefer).

Shake the cocktail and double strain into the prepared glass.

You can garnish with a lime wedge, but I think the cocktail looks beautiful just as it is.



- Choose a good quality spirit. Just as a chef will tell you to only use a wine in cooking that you would drink on it is own, it is the same with the tequila. There are many very good tequilas, and there is a style to suit everyone.

- Squeeze your limes at the last minute. As always the freshness and vibrancy of the juice is very important. Freshly squeezed juice is very different from juice that has been left overnight or bought in a bottle. Don’t forget to roll the lime before squeezing, to massage the skin so that you can extract the most juice. I prefer to use a Mexican Elbow squeezer which also presses the essential oil in the peel and so adds extra zestiness – you will see it spritzing around as you squeeze.

- Don't shake the cocktail too much or use poor quality ice or you might dilute the flavour and texture too much and the ingredients may start to separate.

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IF THERE IS ONE CLASSIC SOUR COCKTAIL THAT TRULY CAPTURES THE HEART AND IMAGINATION, IT IS THE MARGARITA.

TOMMY'S MARGARITA

A popular and famous twist which uses agave nectar, diluted 1:1 with water instead of Triple Sec. It was invented in Tommy's Mexican Restaurant in San Francisco by Julio Bermejo, a dear friend who has spread the love and knowledge of tequila drinks around the world for decades. Agave nectar or syrup is nowadays easy to find on the market too.

TOMMY'S AL PASTOR MARGARITA

Inspired by and dedicated to the aforementioned Julio, and also Benjamin Padrón, another trailblazer behind the Margarita culture, who created Margarita Al Pastor, made with a mix of roasted pineapple, coriander leaves, chilli, and other local ingredients.

My tribute is therefore a combination of Tommy's Margarita and Margarita Al Pastor.

For this I use a reposado tequila, which generally and by definition is aged between two and twelve months, and has some deeper flavour notes with hints of spices, caramel and wood. I also add a combination that is defined as a shrub (vinegar, sugar and herbs or fruits), specifically made of pineapple, lime juice and agave nectar here. Plus a little vinegar, which preserves the freshness of the concoction, which is known as a Shrub. I will explain more about Shrubs in **Lesson 20**, where you will also find the recipe.

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THE GLASS:

Rocks glass

THE INGREDIENTS:

50ml Reposado tequila
20ml **pineapple shrub**
20ml fresh lime juice (about 1 lime)

THE METHOD:

Pour your tequila into a three-part shaker and add the lime and pineapple shrub. Add the freshly squeezed lime juice and stir briefly.

Taste before you add ice and shake, as even though the drink is not yet diluted and chilled you will still feel whether the balance is right.

Now add ice and shake.

Place some ice in your chilled glass – one large chunk of ice is impressive – and double strain the cocktail over the top.

FOR THE GARNISH:

Finish with a dramatic-looking **raspberry and mexican chilli leather**.

16. MOJITO

One of the world's oldest cocktails and still a great favourite, this is essentially a rum Collins, made with lime juice and sugar, but with the addition of mint, however in every bar in every country around the world you are likely to find different versions.

The exact origins of the cocktail are lost in time. Among the many stories, some credit the drink to Sir Francis Drake, an English explorer and privateer in Cuba, wh used to make a similar medicinal drink with aguardiente, while some others even say it was invented in La Bodeguita del Medio, a bar where Hemingway was a regular. I have a photograph of myself sitting at this bar with Hemingway – actually it is a statue of him – in the place where he is said to have sat, or most likely stood, whenever he visited.

This cocktail is built in the glass rather than being shaken or stirred.

In the Bodeguita del Medio the Mojito is served over cubes of ice but many bars favour crushed ice, which packs the glass to give a very cold sensation. The choice is up to you but for this recipe we are going to go with crushed ice.



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THE GLASS:

Collins glass

THE INGREDIENTS:

25ml freshly squeezed lime juice
2 barspoons of caster sugar
about 10 picked mint leaves, washed and dried, plus a small bunch for garnish
50ml light rum
enough soda water to top up the glass
a little caster sugar for frosting the mint leaves for garnish.

THE METHOD:

Add the lime juice to your chilled glass, then the sugar, and melt by stirring it into the lime juice.

Add the mint leaves to the glass and with a muddler gently press the herbs, enough to extract their essence, but not break the leaves, otherwise the bitterness and herbal notes will be too strong and overpowering.

Fill your glass with crushed ice and add the rum. Stir gently with your bar spoon, top up with soda and finish with a little more crushed ice. Serve with a stirrer and straw.

FOR THE GARNISH:

Have some sugar in a small bowl, wash a small bunch of mint leaves and while they are still wet dip into the sugar to frost them before adding to the top of the glass. If you are making more than one cocktail, a good tip is to keep several small bunches, leaves-downward, in a glass of water so they stay fresh until you are ready to pull them out and dip into the sugar.

VARIATION:

The classic recipe uses sugar, but you could also use a **sugar syrup**, plain or flavoured. Also you can explore different rums, all of which have different nuances. Cuban rum is the romantic choice, but each country which produces the spirit will have their own sugar cane and production process. Choose from light to aged, the latter of which will have a darker colour and a fruity, velvety, sometimes spicy character. You can also experiment with different flavoured sodas, sparkling wines or beers to create your own twist.

- Keep the soda in the fridge and use it chilled.
- Don't stir for too long especially if using crushed ice to avoid excessive dilution.

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AGO'S MOJITO

This is my variation in which classic meets modern, as it is made with wood-aged rum, which has vanilla, toasty and dark fruit notes. I also introduce a sweet and sour lime and mandarin sherbet (which can be pre-batched and kept in the fridge for about a week.)

I will explain more about sherbets, but essentially they are a combination of sugar infused with the essential oils of the citrus peel and then mixed with the juice of the same fruit, originally creted to preserve the freshness and zestiness of citrus, in a time before fridges, but now of course we use them purely to add an extra dimension of flavour and aroma to our cocktails. I also use White Peach and Jasmine Crafted Soda from the London Essence Co. to top up the drink and serve it the La Bodeguita del Medio way, over cubes of ice.

THE GLASS:

Highball glass

THE INGREDIENTS:

about 10 picked mint leaves, washed and dried
40ml **lime and mandarin sherbet**
50ml aged rum
white peach & jasmine soda

THE METHOD:

Muddle the mint in the chilled glass, add the sherbet and then the rum. Stack the glass with cubes of ice, top up with the soda and stir. Add a straw and stirrer.

FOR THE GARNISH:

You could use lime leaves frosted as in the previous version with mint leaves, but a very classic, simple garnish is to slice two 'wheels' of lime (you could also use mandarin, to echo the flavour of the sherbet). Grasp the two wheels with your tweezers, so they slightly overlap, and lower them against the glass so they sit one on top of each other.

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17. SHERBET

Originally created in the time before fridges, the sherbet is another category of pre-mixed ingredients – in this case sweet and sour – which allows you to be creative with citrus and other fruits.

We add sugar, to help extract the flavours and preserve the aromas of the essential oils in the skin of the citrus fruits. The recipe I am going to show you is for Lime and Mandarin Sherbet, which I use in my **Mojito** but you can also utilise it to give a burst of flavour to other cocktails, such as a Sour, Collins, even a variation on a Margarita or Daquiri, whenever you might need a sweet and sour agent.

We are using lime, because it is a classic in the Mojito, while the mandarin gives a sweet aroma that I truly enjoy and holds a special memory for me, as when I was little my father used to put mandarin peel on the radiator so that the warmth brought out the essential oil, like a spritz to keep the room smelling fresh.

I find the process of making the sherbet fascinating because the natural interaction is all down to mother nature, and so you need to be patient.

Remember of course, that in order to achieve the best flavour you need to use good fruit. Also citrus fruit is grown in different countries and climates and at various times throughout the season will be more or less packed with flavour and essential oils, so sometimes you may need to add a little more citrus juice and/or peel according to your preference.

The sherbet is made in two stages. In the first stage, you create a citrus-flavoured sugar syrup from the lime and mandarin peel and sugar, which you can use, as it is, in various cocktails. Then in order to turn the syrup into a sherbet, you add the juice of the fruits.

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LIME & MANDARIN SHERBET

THE INGREDIENTS:

2 organic, unwaxed limes, washed and dried

1 mandarin, washed and dried

200g caster sugar

THE METHOD:

For stage one, peel the limes and mandarin, and keep the flesh to one side.

Weigh the peel in a container (you should have around 20-25g of each) add the sugar, sprinkling it all over the peel, and stir around a little. Seal and leave for around 24 hours at room temperature. After a while you will see the sugar will begin to melt and take on some colour from the natural oils in the citrus peel.

At the end of the process you will have a citrus sugar syrup which you could just keep in the fridge (for up to 7 days) in a sterilised jar or vacuum bag, to use in various cocktails. However, this lesson is about creating the sweet and sour mix that is a sherbet, so we now need to add the sour element.

For stage two, squeeze the reserved limes and mandarin and add to the syrup (the fruit should give you around 50g of lime juice and 100g of mandarin juice).

Stir well, replace the lid and shake to integrate the juice with the sugar.

Filter through a strainer into a clean sterilised jar, to remove the strips of peel. The sherbet will keep for up to 7 days in the fridge. Give the jar a shake before you use it.

The peel can be dried very slowly in the oven at a low temperature (50°C) overnight. Alternatively use a dehydrator if you have one. The peel will be nice and crunchy and could be used as a garnish, or you can blitz it into a powder to sprinkle over a cocktail or to flavour a salt or caster sugar.

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18. ESPRESSO MARTINI

This is the most modern of the classic cocktails, invented by the late Dick Bradsell at Soho Brasserie (the sign of this bar on Old Compton Street can still be found if you look for it) in the 1980s, when a young lady asked him to make her a drink that would give her a kick. With a coffee covered bar and vodka being pretty much the spirit of choice, Dick created a cocktail using vodka, espresso, sugar syrup and coffee liqueur.

Although it was invented in London, as an Italian it is a drink close to my heart because in Italy we like to enjoy Caffè Shakerato, which is a shaken mix of espresso coffee and sugar syrup, served over ice, sometimes even featuring an addition of Amaretto or other liqueurs for an extra kick. It is probably the first cocktail I ever shook and served in the bar in the little square in Lake Como where I grew up.

Sugar syrup makes the drink less bitter/sour. On average 20ml will lace all the ingredients together and provide enough viscosity to create a fantastic, silky mouthfeel, but bear in mind that coffee beans vary in character. Some can be sweet and fruity, others more acidic, so as always, taste, and then decide whether you need to add a little more sugar syrup to balance the flavours.

The ingredients below are for one cocktail, but you can double the quantity if you want to make two drinks in the two-part shaker.

If you are making cocktails for a large number of people, you can make up a larger quantity of freshly brewed coffee (medium–strong) and have it ready to go.



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THE GLASS:

Cocktail coupe or Martini glass

THE INGREDIENTS:

50ml vodka
1 fresh espresso (about 50ml)
20ml **sugar syrup**
10-15ml coffee liqueur
coffee beans for garnish

THE METHOD:

Fill the large tin of a two-piece shaker with ice and add the vodka, coffee and sugar syrup to the small tin. Shake a little faster than usual so you keep the flavours ‘alive’ without too much dilution coming through. Be aware that the warmth of the coffee will create a vacuum in the shaker, so when you open it be a little more careful, as the two tins might stick.

Taste, and if necessary, add a little more sugar syrup and stir (don’t shake again).

Double-strain into your chilled glass. The cocktail should be frothy on the top, to create a contrasting texture. With your tweezers delicately place three coffee beans onto the top of the martini.

VARIATIONS:

You could substitute the vodka with other spirits or liquors. Think of those that go well with coffee, such as an orange flavoured vodka, aged tequila, dark rum or other liquors with nutty and chocolaty flavours. Or, for a variation on vodka, think of flavours which go well with coffee, such as an orange vodka, tequila or, especially in the festive season, a dark rum.

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- Look for a coffee liqueur that says coffee, and not coffee extract on the label.
- Use coffee that is freshly made. For larger party batches, pre-brew the coffee and store it in a bottle in the fridge for a few hours only.

ALCOHOL-FREE ESPRESSO MARTINI

For this I use pre-brewed coffee. As above, make this medium strength, or as you prefer. The fresher and warmer the coffee, the more froth you will achieve on the top (remember as always the look of a cocktail is very important), so don't make more than you need, and don't leave the coffee for too long before shaking, or it will become more bitter and acidic.

To sweeten the cocktail we are going to use spiced almond milk. I love almonds, because they remind me of amaretto and Caffè Shakerato, but you can use any kind of milk, such as hazelnut, cashew or rice milk. You could just make the drink with coffee, almond milk and syrup, but I am using a non-alcoholic Three Spirit, which is created with active ingredients in different styles to suit different moods. Or you can choose one of the many non-alcoholic versions of rum, whisky, after spirits etc. that are now available.

THE GLASS:

Cocktail coupe

THE INGREDIENTS:

50ml pre-brewed coffee
30ml spiced almond syrup (link to recipe at the end)
50ml Three Spirit or other non-alcoholic spirit
cocoa powder to dust

THE METHOD:

Fill the large tin of a two-part shaker with ice, then add the coffee, spiced almond milk and non-alcoholic spirit to the small tin, shake and double strain into the chilled coupe.

FOR THE GARNISH:

Either simply dust the surface of the cocktail, cappuccino-style, with cocoa powder, or to create some more decorative, graphic lines, take two straws or stirrers, and cross them over the top of the glass before dusting.

19. FLEURRISSIMO

There can be no celebration without Champagne! The Champagne cocktail is another of the most classic recipes, which originally called for cognac, sugar cubes and aromatic bitters. This is a twist I created about 15 years ago in honour of the late Princess Grace of Monaco who used to be a guest of The Connaught hotel. The drink is named after the Fleurissimo perfume whose floral notes include violet and rose, and which was created for her wedding to Prince Rainier in 1956, by perfumier James Henry Creed.

I make it with cognac, crème de violette and Peychaud's bitters, which add notes of red fruit, clove and nutmeg.

The style of Champagne is up to you but as cognac has vanilla and dark fruit aromas, and the crème de violette adds sweetness and floral notes, I suggest a **dry brut** style, with good body and acidity.

This is a built cocktail, which doesn't need to be shaken or stirred.

This is the kind of cocktail you will almost certainly share with friends, so you can get ahead by making a pre-batch of cognac and crème de violette. Just scale up accordingly, following the ratio below.



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THE GLASS:

Champagne coupes

THE INGREDIENTS:

15ml cognac per person
5ml crème de violette per person
2 dashes of Peychaud's bitters
1 white sugar cube
Champagne, chilled
red rose petals for garnish

THE METHOD:

Have one sugar cube per glass on a tray or saucer lined with a paper napkin and then add a couple of dashes of the bitters to each cube. The bitters will infuse the sugar while the paper will soak up any excess.

Add the cognac and crème de violette to the chilled Champagne coupes and top up with chilled Champagne.

Drop an infused sugar cube into each glass. This is when the magic happens as the sugar creates a sparkle. Garnish each cocktail with a fresh red rose petal laid on top and serve right away.



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20. BERRY SHRUB

A shrub is a preparation made from fruit (in this case berries) and fruit juice, to which you add a sweet element, which could be syrup, caster sugar, flavoured sugar or honey; and an acidic element, which usually comes from vinegar. You can make it in advance and keep it in the fridge for up to 7 days.

For this lesson, we are going to make a Berry Shrub to use in our special **BBC Maestro Cocktails**. We are using strawberries and raspberries, to which we add cranberry juice which is very fruity but also very dry, so it helps to balance the sweetness of the berries.

For the sweet element we use maple syrup, since maple and berries are a quite moreish, palate-pleasing combination. The berries deliver some acidity, but for the additional acidic element we are using Champagne vinegar, though you could experiment with apple or other vinegars which will have different characters and sharpness. Finally, we add some botanicals – think of them as seasoning – in this case coriander essence, but you could experiment with another herb, such as lavender, oregano, thyme – imagine flavour combinations as if you were cooking.

The process of making the shrub can be cold, which is faster, and allows you to retain the freshness of the natural ingredients; or you can heat the ingredients in a pan, which will give more of a caramelised flavour and aroma. Think of it as the difference between serving fruit alongside a cake or baking the fruit inside the cake.



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This recipe is for a small quantity (about 200ml) but can be scaled up according to the size of your party, or if you just want to have some pre-made in the fridge, to use during the week.

THE INGREDIENTS:

50g strawberries, washed, dried and trimmed of their green tops
50g raspberries, washed and dried
100ml cranberry juice
100ml maple syrup
20ml Champagne vinegar
10 drops of coriander essence

THE METHOD:

Have the berries in a jug or pan, add the cranberry juice, then the maple syrup, vinegar and finally a sprinkling of the coriander essence.

If using the cold method, simply blend with a hand blender, which will keep the freshness of the fruit. Alternatively cook gently in a pan on the hob until you have a soft puree.

Allow to rest at room temperature until cool, to allow the ingredients to meld together, then pour into a sterilised jar or bottle (or seal in a vacuum bag), label and keep in the fridge. It will keep for up to 7 days, after which time it will begin to lose some of the fruitiness and the acidity will get higher. I recommend tasting it after four days to check.

LIME & PINEAPPLE SHRUB

This recipe is used for the **Tommy's Al Pastor Margarita**.

THE INGREDIENTS:

For this you need a very ripe pineapple to provide sweetness as well as acidity. As a variation you could also try verjus, which is a ripe grape juice, in place of the vinegar.

200ml agave nectar, diluted 1:1 with water
100ml fresh lime juice
1kg very ripe pineapple peeled and chopped
20 coriander leaves
15ml apple cider vinegar

THE METHOD:

Put all the ingredients into a blender. Blend and strain through a fine sieve until clear, then pour into a sterilised bottle or jar and keep in the fridge for up to 7 days as above.

21. THE BBC MAESTRO FESTIVE COCKTAIL TRIO

In this lesson I will show you how you can use your pre-mixed batch of **Berry Shrub** in three different ways, marrying the festive berries with the aroma of pine needles in the garnish.

For the vodka cocktail, you can infuse a bottle of vodka with about 20g pine needles (washed and dried), according to the method in the Soda lesson.

For these cocktails, why not have some fun with different shapes of ice in the rocks glasses. Decorate the outside of the wine glass for the Champagne cocktail by sprinkling it with citrus dust, in this case lemon.

CHAMPAGNE BERRY COCKTAIL & ALCOHOL-FREE BERRY COCKTAIL

The base of each cocktail is the same: 40ml of Berry Shrub. As this is such a small quantity, I suggest you shake enough for both the Champagne cocktail and the alcohol-free cocktail together, then finish them with their different toppings.

> STRAIGHT UP WITH STYLE, AND DON'T FORGET THE SMILE.

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FOR THE CHAMPAGNE BERRY COCKTAIL

THE GLASS:

White wine glass

THE INGREDIENTS:

40ml Berry Shrub
Champagne, to top up

FOR THE ALCOHOL-FREE BERRY COCKTAIL

THE GLASS:

Rocks glass

THE INGREDIENTS:

40ml Berry Shrub
ginger ale, to top up (or your own **flavoured soda water**)

THE METHOD (FOR BOTH):

Fill a two-part cocktail shaker with ice and add 80ml Berry Shrub (i.e. the quantity for both cocktails). Shake and then double strain half into the chilled wine glass and half into the chilled rocks glass over ice.

Top up the wine glass with Champagne, and the rocks glass with ginger ale or your flavoured soda water.

VODKA BERRY COCKTAIL

THE GLASS:

Rocks glass

THE INGREDIENTS:

40ml Berry Shrub

40ml pine-infused vodka

THE METHOD:

Pour the Berry Shrub and vodka into a mixing glass and fill with ice. Stir energetically in order to break down the viscosity of the shrub and integrate the pine and resin notes in the vodka. Strain into the chilled glass over ice.

FOR THE GARNISH:

Add a sprig of washed and dried pine needles to each glass to give a festive contrast of colour, and if you like, grate a little nutmeg over the top of each. The finishing touch is to spray a little green mandarin essential oil, diluted in alcohol (or choose orange or lemon) over and around the glasses.



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ADDITIONAL RECIPES

SUGAR SYRUP

You can buy this, and you can also find flavoured syrup, but it is easy to make your own with two parts caster sugar to one part of water. If you are making a large amount of cocktails, you can make up a batch in advance. When you make a syrup, I suggest you weigh the water as well as the sugar to be more precise.

THE INGREDIENTS:

400g caster sugar
200ml water

THE METHOD:

There are two ways to make your syrup. You can simply stir or blend the sugar and water at room temperature until the sugar has completely dissolved, which will give you a light liquid. Or, if you want a thicker syrup, which will lend a more silky and elegant mouthfeel to your cocktail, put the sugar and water into a saucepan and heat gently until the sugar dissolves.

Take off the heat and allow to cool.

Whichever method you choose, pour your syrup into a sterilised jar or bottle, label it with the date and keep in the fridge for up to two weeks – however I recommend 7 days to keep the maximum quality.

VARIATIONS:

The caster sugar can be infused with vanilla, herbs, spices, or other botanicals of your choice before making the syrup. Mix the botanicals and sugar and leave for 24 hours for dry ingredients, or six hours for fresh ingredients. Once infused, remove the botanicals and make the syrup according to the method.

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SPICED ALMOND MILK

This is the milk I use in the alcohol-free Espresso Martini.

THE INGREDIENTS:

300ml good quality almond milk
3g ground ginger
3g ground cinnamon
3g green cardamom pods
150ml sugar syrup

THE METHOD:

Blend all the ingredients together, and strain through a chinois, fine sieve or use a V60 filter, to remove the solids. Pour into a sterilised bottle and keep in the fridge for up to three days.

MARINADED CHERRIES

THE INGREDIENTS:

500g cherries, in season, washed
300g caster sugar
250ml bourbon

THE METHOD:

Combine all the ingredients in a sterilised jar or vacuum bag and allow to infuse for a minimum of three months.

VARIATION:

Feel free to add some dried spices such as coriander seeds or cinnamon, or citrus peel, and you can also play with other spirits.

DRIED FRUIT

To dry fruit for a garnish, slice thinly and spread over a baking sheet. Put into a preheated oven at 50°C for around 12 hours/overnight, or until dried. Store in an airtight container for up to a month.

CITRUS DUST

This is simply de-hydrated citrus peel, blitzed to a powder and mixed with sugar, which you can use to flavour a syrup or to dust the outside of your glasses, to give a festive touch. This is especially striking if you have a richly coloured cocktail.

THE INGREDIENTS:

40g citrus peel
8g caster sugar

THE METHOD:

Preheat the oven to 50°C

Spread the peel over a baking tray and put into the oven for around 12 hours or overnight until dried.

Transfer to a blender and blitz to a fine powder, then mix with the sugar.

Store in an airtight container for up to a month.

RASPBERRY & MEXICAN CHILLI LEATHER

A leather is a solidified puree, which you can cut and carve into the shape you want, as a garnish.

THE INGREDIENTS:

8g ancho chilli
150ml water
300g raspberry puree
70g pectin
100g caster sugar

THE METHOD:

Preheat the oven to 50°C

First blend the chilli and water then filter, using a V60 coffee filter.

Mix this chilli water with the rest of the ingredients and either use a Thermomix on speed 6 at 120° for 15 minutes, or simmer all the ingredients in a pan on the hob, stirring with a spatula throughout, to avoid sticking, until the mixture has a smooth texture, with no lumps. Use a food thermometer to make sure the temperature doesn't go above 70°C. Spread over a baking tray and put into the oven for around 12 hours or overnight until dried.

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FRUIT JELLY GARNISH

A small fruit jelly shaped in a mould makes a beautiful garnish. For the **Cacao Soda Spritz** I use raspberry puree or blackberry puree, according to the season, to give a dense colour, but you can use whatever puree you like, or use juice, which will give a lighter colour for a summery jelly.

THE INGREDIENTS:

150g fruit puree or juice
50g caster sugar, if needed
100ml water
5g agar-agar

THE METHOD:

Either combine all the ingredients in a Thermomix on speed 5 at 100°C for 20 minutes, or simmer all the ingredients in a pan on the hob, stirring with a spatula throughout, to avoid sticking, until the mixture has a smooth texture, with no lumps. Use a food thermometer to make sure the temperature stays at 100°C. or slightly above.

In a pan, simmer all the ingredients, and keep stirring until the mix has a smooth texture and no lumps, using a spatula throughout otherwise the liquid sticks to the pan. Keep the temperature under control using a food thermometer, keeping the temperature always at 100C or slightly above.

Pour into shaped moulds or a tray and leave to cool and set. If using a tray, cut to whatever shape you like.

VARIATION:

If using puree, you could add some botanicals, such as cloves, juniper or saffron and then strain before adding the agar-agar.

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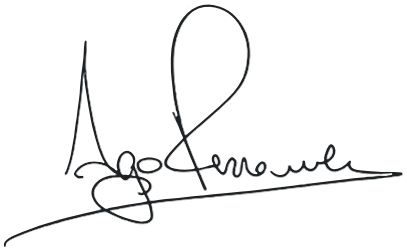


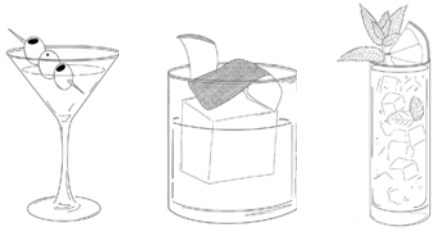
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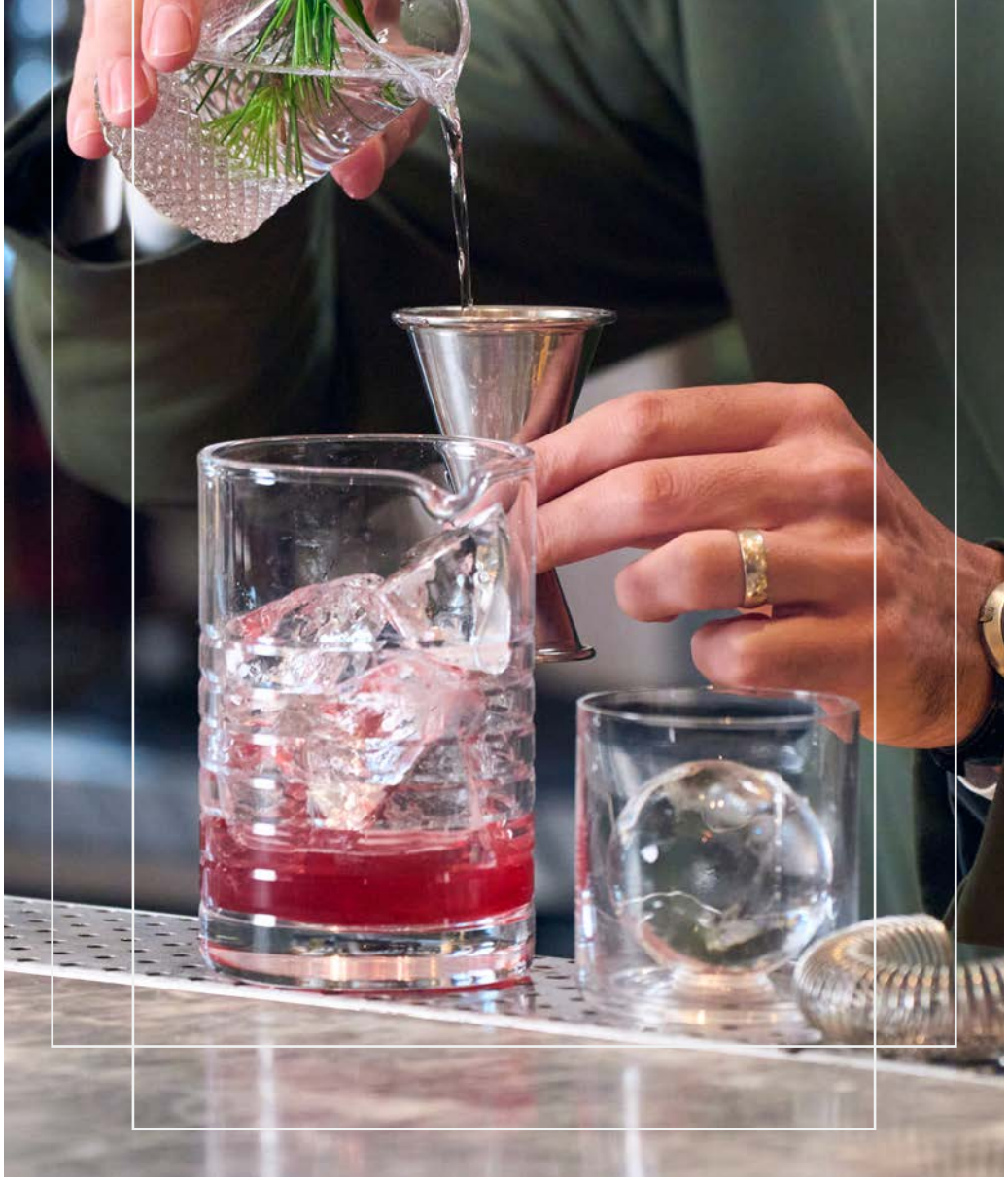
So, we have reached the end of the course, but I hope that this is just the beginning of your adventures in cocktail-making and flavours exploring.

As I think you know by now, I believe that in mixology as in life, in order to do something properly, you need to understand the basic structure of things, the roots and the cultures that shaped them. This is why I wanted to introduce you to the DNA and history of some of the world's most iconic classic cocktails, and show the way that different people, cultures and ingredients have evolved these around the world. For me this is what makes the world of cocktails endlessly fascinating and exciting, and I hope you share my enthusiasm.

Now it is over to you. It is time to find your own style, be creative with flavours and aromas, bring your own interpretation to the classics, or come up with new signature drinks to suit your own palate and surprise your beloved ones, whatever the occasion. Inspiration is all around you, so expand your imagination, use all your senses, mix, taste, experiment, and above all enjoy! As I always say to my guests: straight up with style, and don't forget the smile – because no cocktail should ever be served and savoured without a smile.







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