Ice Breakers

A Book of Cocktails

Soham Garg

DELHI · 2026 EDITION

A COCKTAIL BOOK

Ice Breakers

SOHAM GARG



Forty-two classic & contemporary cocktails,
every bottle worth knowing about,
and the host's guide to a great night

Delhi · 2026 Edition
Built on the classics of The Bartender's Best Friend *by Mardee Haidin Regan*

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Foreword

Every great night has a moment when someone hands you a glass and it's exactly right: cold, bright and balanced. That first drink breaks the ice. This book is about being the person who makes it.

It's built on the classics. These are the drinks bartenders have poured for a century, from the Daiquiri, Mojito and Margarita to the Old Fashioned, plus the modern icons that joined them. Each one is explained in plain words, with how to say its name, what it actually is and the story behind it. Recipes are measured in millilitres and made with what you can actually buy, down to the Coke and the Sprite.

House parties are fast and loud, so there's a whole section of *fast pours* that need no garnish and no shaker, plus big batches for twenty.

There's also an honest *Bottle Guide*. Every bottle on Delhi and Gurgaon shelves from ₹400 to ₹7,000 is rated, with what's worth splurging on and what's a waste of money. And there's a chapter most cocktail books skip: how strong each drink really is.

How to Read a Drink Page

Everything on a cocktail page, explained once.

THE DRAWING	Shows the drink and its garnish. No proper glass? A red cup is fine.
THE NAME & HOW TO SAY IT	With the stressed part in CAPITALS: *moh-HEE-toh*.
WHAT IT IS	One plain sentence explaining the drink.
FLAVOUR NOTES	Two words beside the drawing, so you can pick by mood.
INGREDIENTS & METHOD	In millilitres. A large peg is 60 ml.
THE STORY	Something to tell your guests while they wait.
ON THE SHELF	The bottle we recommend, with its price.
EQUAL TO	How much alcohol the drink holds, in standard drinks. One standard drink is about one small peg (30 ml) of spirit.
LEVEL	● ○ ○ easy, ● ● ○ needs a little practice, ● ● ● for showing off.

Bar Words, Made Easy

Every unfamiliar word in this book, in plain English.

ABV · Alcohol by volume: the percentage of the liquid that is pure alcohol. Most Indian spirits are 42.8%.

Aperitif · A lighter, often bittersweet drink to open the appetite before dinner, such as Aperol, Campari or vermouth.

Aperol (***AH-per-ol***) · A bright-orange Italian aperitif tasting of bitter orange and rhubarb. Only 11% alcohol. The star of the Spritz.

Bitters · A herbal flavouring so concentrated it's used by the dash. Angostura is the famous one, in the bottle with the oversized label.

Blended · Whisky made by mixing whiskies from several distilleries or grains. Most Scotch and almost all Indian whisky is blended.

Build · Make the drink directly in the glass you serve it in.

Campari (***kam-PAR-ee***) · A bitter, bright-red Italian aperitif, about 25% alcohol. The backbone of the Negroni.

Cocktail · Any mixed drink of spirit plus other ingredients. Originally it meant spirit, sugar, water and bitters.

Curaçao (***KYOOR-uh-sow***) · An orange liqueur. The blue version tastes the same, it's just coloured.

Daiquiri (***DYE-kuh-ree***) · Rum, lime and sugar, shaken. Not the frozen slushie. The most important sour.

Dash · About 1 ml. One quick flick of the bottle.

Dry · Not sweet. A 'dry' Martini has very little vermouth.

Dry shake · Shaking without ice first, to whip egg white into foam.

Garnish · The fruit, peel or herb on top. It should add aroma, not just looks.

Highball · A spirit topped with plenty of mixer over ice. Also the tall glass it's served in.

Jigger · The small double-ended measuring cup, usually 30 and 60 ml.

Liqueur (***li-KYOOR***) · A sweetened, flavoured spirit, usually 15–35% alcohol: triple sec, Baileys, coffee liqueur.

Mixer · The non-alcoholic part: Coke, Sprite, soda, tonic, juice.

Muddle · Press fruit, sugar or herbs in the glass to release juice and oils.

Bar Words, continued

Neat · Straight from the bottle, with no ice and no mixer.

On the rocks · Poured over ice.

Orgeat (*OR-zhat*) · A sweet almond syrup used in tropical drinks like the Mai Tai.

Peg · The Indian measure. Small is 30 ml, large is 60 ml.

Proof · Another way of showing strength. In the US, proof is twice the ABV.

Schnapps · In most bars, a sweet fruit liqueur, like peach schnapps.

Shaken vs stirred · Shake anything with juice, cream or egg. Stir drinks made only of spirits.

Single malt · Whisky from one distillery, made only from malted barley. For sipping, not mixing.

Sour · Spirit + citrus + sweetener. The most useful family of drinks in this book.

Splash · A small, unmeasured top-up, about 15–30 ml.

Spritz · An aperitif or wine topped with bubbles and soda.

Standard drink · 10 g of pure alcohol, the WHO measure. A large peg is about two.

Tiki · Fun, tropical rum drinks born in 1930s–40s America, like the Mai Tai and Hurricane.

Triple sec · A clear orange liqueur. Cointreau is the famous premium one.

Twist · A strip of citrus peel squeezed over a drink to spray its oils.

Up · Shaken or stirred with ice, then strained into a glass with no ice.

Vermouth (*ver-MOOTH*) · Wine flavoured with herbs and strengthened a little (about 15–18%). It comes sweet (red) or dry (white). Keep it in the fridge once opened.

Well · The everyday bottles a bar mixes with.



PART II

The Bottle Guide

Every bottle from ₹400 to ₹7,000,
rated: what to buy, what to sip, what to skip

From ₹400 to ₹7,000

Every bottle on Delhi and Gurgaon shelves, honestly rated.

Here's the secret that bartenders know: **in a mixed drink, an ₹800 bottle and a ₹3,000 bottle taste almost the same.** Lime, sugar, ice and Coke cover the differences. Expensive bottles shine only when you drink them neat, on ice, or in spirit-forward drinks like the Martini and Old Fashioned.

So spend on *what you'll taste*. Buy great-value mixing bottles for the party, and one special bottle for sipping.

HOW TO READ THE RATINGS

★★★★★ Our score for *value and taste* in its price class

MUST-HAVE — Buy these first. They make the most drinks for the money.

IF BUDGET ALLOWS — A real step up that you'll taste.

SIP, DON'T MIX — Excellent, but wasted in juice or Coke. Drink it neat or on ice.

SKIP IT — A waste of money, or there's a better option.

HOW STRONG IS A BOTTLE?

The **ABV** (alcohol by volume) on the label tells you how much of the liquid is pure alcohol. Indian spirits are usually **42.8%**, so one 60 ml peg holds about **26 ml of pure alcohol**. Imported spirits are usually 40% (24 ml per peg). Liqueurs are 11–40%, so a 60 ml pour holds 7–24 ml.

GGN marks bottles that aren't sold in Delhi but are easy to find in Gurgaon. Their prices are Gurgaon MRPs.

Prices are Delhi MRPs for 750 ml unless noted, from Sep–Oct 2026 price lists. Always check the MRP on the bottle.

Vodka

VODKA		*usually 40–42.8%*
Romanov *Fine in punch. Magic Moments is smoother for ₹50 more.*	★★☆☆☆	₹480
Magic Moments MUST-HAVE *Smooth, neutral and great value. The house-party workhorse for anything with juice or Sprite.*	★★★☆☆	₹530
Magic Moments flavours (orange, green apple…) SKIP IT *Flavoured vodkas taste artificial. A squeeze of real fruit does it better.*	★★☆☆☆	₹580
Magic Moments Verve IF BUDGET ALLOWS *The smoother, triple-distilled Magic Moments.*	★★★☆☆	₹760
Smirnoff MUST-HAVE *Clean and reliable. The Moscow Mule's original partner.*	★★★☆☆	₹810
8848 Made in the Himalayas IF BUDGET ALLOWS *Indian premium vodka. The best upgrade under ₹1,500 for Cosmos and Martinis.*	★★★★☆	₹1,200
Absolut GGN MUST-HAVE *The best all-round vodka. Absolut Citron (₹1,600) makes a perfect Lemon Drop.*	★★★★☆	₹1,400
Smoke Vodka (classic) *Indian craft vodka.*	★★★☆☆	₹1,600
Russian Standard *Smooth, but no better in a mixed drink than 8848.*	★★★☆☆	₹1,760
Stolichnaya *A solid classic.*	★★★☆☆	₹1,970
Ketel One SIP, DON'T MIX *A bartender favourite. Best in a Martini or on ice.*	★★★★☆	₹2,800
Kashmyr Natural SIP, DON'T MIX *Indian luxury vodka. A good gift.*	★★★★☆	₹2,800
Grey Goose SIP, DON'T MIX *Silky and famous. Pay for it only if you sip it.*	★★★★☆	₹3,530
Belvedere (700 ml) SIP, DON'T MIX *Creamy and rich. A sipping vodka.*	★★★★☆	₹3,780
Cîroc Snap Frost SIP, DON'T MIX *Made from grapes, with a fruity edge. You're mostly paying for the bottle.*	★★★☆☆	₹3,840

Rum

RUM		*usually 42.8%*
Old Monk XXX MUST-HAVE *A cult classic with vanilla and caramel notes. The best-value bottle in Delhi. Cuba Libre, toddy, punch.*	★★★★☆	₹410
Bacardi Black *A cheap dark rum that's fine with Coke.*	★★★☆☆	₹450
Old Monk Gold Reserve *A touch smoother.*	★★★★☆	₹500
Old Monk White *A budget white rum for Mojitos.*	★★★☆☆	₹520
Old Monk Supreme *A richer Old Monk.*	★★★★☆	₹600
Bacardi White MUST-HAVE *The Daiquiri, Mojito and Piña Colada rum.*	★★★★☆	₹750
Bacardi Limón / Apple / Orange SKIP IT *Flavouring you don't need. Use fresh fruit.*	★★☆☆☆	₹750
Old Monk Very Old Vatted IF BUDGET ALLOWS *Good enough to sip, and very good value.*	★★★★☆	₹790
Daku Gold *Indian craft rum.*	★★★☆☆	₹1,600
Camikara 3 Year SIP, DON'T MIX *Indian cane-juice rum. Sip it neat.*	★★★★☆	₹2,000
Bacardi Añejo Cuatro IF BUDGET ALLOWS *Aged four years. Makes a luxury Mojito or Daiquiri.*	★★★★☆	₹2,700
Ron Abuelo Añejo SIP, DON'T MIX *Panama rum for sipping.*	★★★★☆	₹2,950
Bacardi Ocho (8 years) SIP, DON'T MIX *Rich and smooth. A whisky drinker's rum.*	★★★★★	₹3,260
Flor de Caña (700 ml) SIP, DON'T MIX *Nicaraguan rum. Lovely on ice.*	★★★★☆	₹3,285
Kohinoor Reserve SIP, DON'T MIX *Premium Indian dark rum. Something to show off.*	★★★★☆	₹3,740

Gin

GIN		*usually 40–43%*
Blue Moon Dry Gin *The cheapest proper gin. Fine with tonic.*	★★☆☆☆	₹1,040
Greater Than (London Dry) MUST-HAVE *Indian craft gin and the best value on the shelf. G&T, Gimlet, Collins.*	★★★★☆	₹1,100
Samsara IF BUDGET ALLOWS *Indian gin with citrus notes. Lovely with tonic.*	★★★★☆	₹1,430
Zoya Special Batch *Premium Indian gin.*	★★★☆☆	₹1,500
Beefeater London Dry GGN IF BUDGET ALLOWS *A bartender's favourite and a classic Martini gin.*	★★★★☆	₹1,500
Nicobar Indian Dry IF BUDGET ALLOWS *From Goa, with coastal spice notes.*	★★★★☆	₹1,700
Tanqueray London Dry IF BUDGET ALLOWS *Bold and crisp. The classic Martini and Negroni gin.*	★★★★☆	₹1,790
TERAI India Dry IF BUDGET ALLOWS *Indian craft gin with spice notes.*	★★★★☆	₹1,800
Bombay Sapphire IF BUDGET ALLOWS *Floral and smooth, in the blue bottle everyone recognises.*	★★★★☆	₹1,880
Chambal Indian Dry *Indian craft gin.*	★★★★☆	₹1,950
Bulldog *Good, but Indian craft gins give you more for less.*	★★★☆☆	₹2,450
Hapusa SIP, DON'T MIX *Himalayan juniper and mango. One of India's finest gins.*	★★★★☆	₹3,000
Jaisalmer SIP, DON'T MIX *Indian luxury gin. Serve it in a simple G&T so you can taste it.*	★★★★☆	₹3,440
Hendrick's (700 ml) SIP, DON'T MIX *Cucumber and rose. A G&T treat.*	★★★★☆	₹3,955
Roku (700 ml) SIP, DON'T MIX *Japanese botanicals. A gift-worthy G&T gin.*	★★★★☆	₹4,450
The Botanist (700 ml) SIP, DON'T MIX *Islay gin made with 22 local botanicals.*	★★★★☆	₹6,320

Whisky · Under ₹1,000

EVERYDAY MIXING WHISKY

usually 42.8%

Officer's Choice Blue ★★☆☆☆ ₹410
Harsh on its own. If you must, use it only with Coke or soda.

McDowell's No. 1 ★★☆☆☆ ₹440
A mass-market blend for whisky-Coke.

Imperial Blue GGN ★★☆☆☆ ₹470
A mass-market blend for whisky-Coke.

Royal Challenge ★★½☆☆ ₹490
Fine in hot toddies.

Sterling Reserve B7 ★★½☆☆ ₹500
Fine in sours and hot toddies.

Royal Stag GGN ★★½☆☆ ₹570
India's best-selling whisky. Fine in sours and toddies.

Sterling Reserve B10 ★★★☆☆ ₹800
Smoother than B7.

Blenders Pride GGN IF BUDGET ALLOWS ★★★☆☆ ₹800
A smooth mixing whisky for highballs and the Old Fashioned.

Rockford Classic ★★★☆☆ ₹830
Easy-drinking blend.

Antiquity Blue MUST-HAVE ★★★☆☆ ₹880
Smooth enough for sours and highballs. The best-value mixing whisky in Delhi.

Rockford Reserve ★★★☆☆ ₹950
A step up from Classic.

Whisky · ₹1,000 to ₹2,000

SCOTCH BLENDS & BOURBON

usually 40–42.8%

100 Pipers Deluxe GGN — ★★★☆☆ — ₹1,300
A Scotch blend for mixing.

VAT 69 — ★★★☆☆ — ₹1,380
An entry-level Scotch blend.

William Lawson's — ★★★☆☆ — ₹1,400
An entry-level Scotch blend.

Ballantine's Finest GGN — ★★★☆☆ — ₹1,400
A light Scotch blend for highballs.

The Famous Grouse — ★★★★☆ — ₹1,500
A soft, honeyed Scotch blend.

Jim Beam (white label) IF BUDGET ALLOWS — ★★★★☆ — ₹1,540
American bourbon with vanilla notes. For the Mint Julep and whisky sours.

Teacher's Highland Cream MUST-HAVE — ★★★★☆ — ₹1,550
Gently smoky. The best highball whisky under ₹2,000.

Black Dog Centenary IF BUDGET ALLOWS — ★★★★☆ — ₹1,580
A smooth Scotch blend for the Old Fashioned and Manhattan.

Dewar's White Label — ★★★★☆ — ₹1,620
A classic highball Scotch.

Johnnie Walker Red Label SKIP IT — ★★★☆☆ — ₹1,700
You pay for the famous name. Teacher's is as good in a highball.

Grant's Triple Wood — ★★★★☆ — ₹1,750
A smooth Scotch blend.

Jameson Irish Whiskey GGN — ★★★★☆ — ₹1,900
IF BUDGET ALLOWS
Soft and sweet. Made for the Irish Coffee and whisky-ginger.

Whisky · ₹2,000 to ₹4,000

PREMIUM BLENDS & MALTS

usually 40–46%

Bushmills Original (700 ml) ★★★★☆ ₹2,025
IF BUDGET ALLOWS
Soft Irish whiskey. Made for the Irish Coffee and whisky-ginger.

Black Dog Gold Reserve 12 ★★★★☆ ₹2,190
IF BUDGET ALLOWS
A 12-year-old blend at a fair price.

Paul John Nirvana IF BUDGET ALLOWS ★★★☆☆ ₹2,300
The cheapest Indian single malt. Light and fruity.

Chivas Regal 12 GGN SIP, DON'T MIX ★★★★☆ ₹2,600
Smooth, honeyed and a classic gift.

Wild Turkey IF BUDGET ALLOWS ★★★★☆ ₹2,940
Bold bourbon for a serious Old Fashioned.

Johnnie Walker Black Label ★★★★★ ₹3,290
IF BUDGET ALLOWS
The benchmark 12-year-old blend. Sip it with a splash of water.

The Glenlivet 12 GGN SIP, DON'T MIX ★★★★☆ ₹3,400
A fruity Speyside single malt.

Indri Trini SIP, DON'T MIX ★★★★★ ₹3,700
World-famous Indian single malt from Haryana.

Paul John Brilliance SIP, DON'T MIX ★★★★★ ₹3,700
Award-winning single malt from Goa.

Monkey Shoulder (700 ml) ★★★★★ ₹3,770
IF BUDGET ALLOWS
A blended malt made for mixing. It makes a superb Old Fashioned.

Maker's Mark SIP, DON'T MIX ★★★★☆ ₹3,800
Soft, wheated bourbon.

Whisky · Special Bottles

SINGLE MALTS & ICONS

usually 40–46%

Amrut Fusion SIP, DON'T MIX ★★★★☆ ₹4,290
India's most-awarded single malt.

Johnnie Walker Double Black ★★★★☆ ₹4,320
SIP, DON'T MIX
A smokier Black Label.

Jack Daniel's Old No. 7 SKIP IT ★★★☆☆ ₹4,520
Steep in Delhi. Jim Beam or Wild Turkey is better value, or buy it in Gurgaon.

Glenmorangie The Original ★★★★☆ ₹4,700
SIP, DON'T MIX
A soft, fruity Highland single malt.

Laphroaig 10 SIP, DON'T MIX ★★★★☆ ₹4,760
Very smoky and medicinal. You love it or hate it.

Singleton 12 (700 ml) SIP, DON'T MIX ★★★★☆ ₹5,165
A smooth, sherried Speyside malt.

Glenfiddich 12 (700 ml) SIP, DON'T MIX ★★★★☆ ₹5,190
Pear and oak. Never with Coke.

Brandy & Tequila

BRANDY & COGNAC

usually 40–42.8%

Morpheus XO MUST-HAVE ★★★☆☆ ₹840
Smooth Indian brandy for the Sidecar, sangria and toddies.

Roulette Blended Brandy ★★★☆☆ ₹1,160
A mixing brandy.

Hennessy VS (700 ml) SIP, DON'T MIX ★★★★☆ ₹8,600
Above this guide's range. Real cognac for sipping.

TEQUILA

usually 35–40%

Casco Viejo Silver IF BUDGET ALLOWS ★★★☆☆ ₹2,250
The cheapest tequila on Delhi shelves. Fine for Margaritas and Palomas.

José Cuervo Especial Silver ★★★☆☆ ₹2,430
IF BUDGET ALLOWS
The most famous tequila name. Reliable.

La Chica Blanco (700 ml) ★★★☆☆ ₹2,450
Mixing tequila.

Camino Real Blanco ★★★☆☆ ₹2,660
Costs more than Casco Viejo for no real gain.

1800 Silver SIP, DON'T MIX ★★★★☆ ₹5,000
100% agave and smooth.

Patrón Silver SIP, DON'T MIX ★★★★☆ ₹5,180
Superb, but pouring it into a Margarita is a waste. Sip it.

Patrón Reposado SIP, DON'T MIX ★★★★☆ ₹6,200
Lightly aged and smooth.

Liqueurs & Aperitifs

LIQUEURS

usually 11–40% · check the label

Onsra Zest Triple Sec · 40% MUST-HAVE ★★★☆☆ ₹1,130
Orange liqueur for the Margarita, Cosmo, Sidecar, Kamikaze and Mai Tai.

Antica Sambuca (700 ml) · ~38% SKIP IT ★★☆☆☆ ₹1,300
Aniseed shots. Half the bottle will sit there for years.

Maharani Mahansar Narangam · orange ★★★☆☆ ₹1,420
A heritage Rajasthani orange liqueur. An interesting alternative to triple sec.

Martini Rosso / Extra Dry (1 L) GGN IF BUDGET ALLOWS ★★★☆☆ ₹1,500
Vermouth for the Negroni and Manhattan (Rosso) or the Martini (Extra Dry).

Bandarful Coffee Liqueur MUST-HAVE ★★★☆☆ ₹1,570
Indian coffee liqueur for the Espresso Martini and White Russian.

Kahlúa GGN IF BUDGET ALLOWS ★★★★☆ ₹1,600
The classic coffee liqueur for the White Russian and Espresso Martini.

Limoncello d'Amalfi ★★★☆☆ ₹1,950
Sweet lemon liqueur. Serve it ice-cold after dinner.

Aperol · 11% IF BUDGET ALLOWS ★★★★☆ ₹2,020
Essential for the Spritz, and an Aperol Spritz party is easy and elegant.

Baileys Irish Cream · 17% IF BUDGET ALLOWS ★★★★☆ ₹2,140
Dessert in a glass. Over ice, or in coffee.

Teichenne Triple Sec · 40% ★★★☆☆ ₹2,260
A good triple sec, but Onsra costs half as much.

Campari · ~25% IF BUDGET ALLOWS ★★★★☆ ₹2,290
Bitter, red and essential for the Negroni. A bottle lasts a long time.

Ottos Athens Vermouth IF BUDGET ALLOWS ★★★☆☆ ₹2,500
Red vermouth for the Negroni and Manhattan. Keep it in the fridge once opened.

Archers Peach Schnapps · 18% SKIP IT ★★☆☆☆ ₹2,980
You only need it for one drink. Use peach syrup instead.

Jägermeister (700 ml) · 35% SKIP IT ★★☆☆☆ ₹3,070
A herbal shot liqueur. Buy it only if your crowd actually does shots.

Amarula · 17% ★★★☆☆ ₹3,990
A South African cream liqueur with a caramel taste.

Cointreau (700 ml) · 40% SIP, DON'T MIX ★★★★☆ ₹5,050
The world's best triple sec, but at this price use Onsra for parties.

Don’t Waste Your Money

Eight mistakes every first-time host makes.

× **Loose, unbranded or “arranged” liquor.** No seal, no excise label, no deal. Illicit liquor can contain methanol, which causes blindness and death. Buy only from licensed shops.

× **Super-premium bottles for mixing.** Grey Goose (₹3,530) in a Screwdriver, Patrón (₹5,180) in a Margarita or a single malt with Coke. You’re paying thousands extra for flavour nobody can taste.

× **Pre-mixed “duet” and flavoured bottles.** Gin & lime duets, flavoured vodkas, Bacardi Limón and Mango Chilli. Fresh lime costs a few rupees and tastes far better.

× **Ready-to-drink coolers for a crowd.** A ₹120 Bacardi Breezer-style cooler (275 ml, about 5%) holds 13 ml of pure alcohol, which works out to ₹9 per ml. Bacardi white rum works out to ₹2.3 per ml, and Old Monk to ₹1.3. Coolers cost about four to seven times more for the same buzz.

× **A whole bottle for one drink.** Peach schnapps (₹2,980), sambuca and Jägermeister are bottles you’ll use 60 ml of. Choose drinks that share bottles. Triple sec alone unlocks eight.

× **Paying for the label.** Johnnie Walker Red (₹1,700) and Jack Daniel’s (₹4,520) are fine, but Teacher’s (₹1,550) and Jim Beam (₹1,540) do the same job for less.

× **Bottled lime juice and sour mix.** They make every drink taste flat. A bag of limes is cheaper and makes the drink.

× **Too little ice.** The cheapest ingredient ruins the most drinks. Buy 1 kg per guest.

Four Starter Kits

Start where you like. Each kit builds on the one before.

KIT 1 · 3 BOTTLES

The First Party

Old Monk XXX	₹410
Magic Moments vodka	₹530
Bacardi White	₹750
Total	**₹1,690**

Unlocks: Cuba Libre, Dark 'n' Stormy, Hot Toddy, Rum Punch, Daiquiri, Mojito, Piña Colada, Hurricane, Moscow Mule, Screwdriver, Bay Breeze, Lychee Martini, Blue Lagoon, Caipiroska, Bloody Mary, and seven of the ten fast pours.

KIT 2 · 5 BOTTLES

The Full House

Old Monk XXX	₹410
Magic Moments vodka	₹530
Bacardi White	₹750
Greater Than Gin	₹1,100
Onsra Zest Triple Sec	₹1,130
Total	**₹3,920**

Unlocks: Everything above, plus the Gin & Tonic, Gimlet, Tom Collins, French 75, Kamikaze, Lemon Drop, Cosmo, Mai Tai and Long Island (with vodka). That's twenty-four cocktails, plus the fast pours.

Starter Kits, continued

KIT 3 · 7 BOTTLES

The Upgrade

Smirnoff	₹810
Bacardi White	₹750
Old Monk XXX	₹410
Tanqueray	₹1,790
Teacher's Highland Cream	₹1,550
Casco Viejo Silver Tequila	₹2,250
Onsra Zest Triple Sec	₹1,130
Total	**₹8,690**

Unlocks: Better-tasting versions of everything, plus whisky and tequila: the Margarita, Paloma, Tequila Sunrise, Long Island, Whisky Sour, Highball and Old Fashioned.

KIT 4 · 9 BOTTLES

The Showstopper

Smirnoff	₹810
Bacardi White	₹750
Bombay Sapphire	₹1,880
Johnnie Walker Black Label	₹3,290
Casco Viejo Silver Tequila	₹2,250
Campari	₹2,290
Ottos Athens Vermouth	₹2,500
Bandarful Coffee Liqueur	₹1,570
Onsra Zest Triple Sec	₹1,130
Total	**₹16,470**

Unlocks: Nearly everything, including the Negroni, Manhattan, Espresso Martini and White Russian. For the Martini, pick up Martini Extra Dry in Gurgaon (₹1,500 for 1 L). Keep the Black Label for sipping.



PART III

Alcohol, Explained

How strong each drink really is

How Strong Is It?

Count the pure alcohol, not the glasses.

ABV is the percentage of a drink that is pure alcohol. To find how much alcohol you're actually getting, multiply the volume by the ABV: **60 ml × 42.8% = 26 ml of pure alcohol.** A **standard drink** is 10 g, or about 12.7 ml, of pure alcohol, so a large peg is about two standard drinks.

THE DRINK	SIZE	ABV	PURE ALCOHOL	STD DRINKS
Small peg of spirit	30 ml	42.8%	13 ml	1.0
Large peg of spirit	60 ml	42.8%	26 ml	2.0
Imported spirit, large peg	60 ml	40%	24 ml	1.9
Glass of wine	150 ml	13%	20 ml	1.5
Beer can (regular)	330 ml	5%	16 ml	1.3
Strong beer can	500 ml	8%	40 ml	3.2
Strong beer bottle	650 ml	8%	52 ml	4.1
Breezer-style cooler	275 ml	4.8%	13 ml	1.0
Aperol Spritz (this book)	1 drink	9%	17 ml	1.4
Margarita (this book)	1 drink	21%	25 ml	2.0
Long Island Iced Tea (this book)	1 drink	13%	29 ml	2.3

The surprise: one 650 ml bottle of strong beer contains as much alcohol as two large pegs. A Long Island Iced Tea holds more than two standard drinks. The size of the glass tells you nothing about the alcohol inside.

Typical ABV: beer 4–8% · wine 12–14% · Aperol 11% · cream liqueurs 17% · Campari ~25% · triple sec 15–40% · imported spirits 40% · Indian spirits 42.8%.

Know Your Line

Blood alcohol (BAC), and roughly how many large pegs get you there.

BAC	HOW IT FEELS
0.02–0.04%	Relaxed and warm. The 'one drink' glow.
0.05–0.07%	**Tipsy.** Talkative and confident, with judgement starting to slip.
0.08–0.10%	**Drunk.** Slower reactions, loud, clumsy.
0.11–0.15%	**Very drunk.** Slurring, unsteady, mood swings.
0.16–0.20%	**Blackout zone.** Memory gaps, nausea, needs looking after.
0.25%+	**Danger.** Confusion and passing out. Risk of alcohol poisoning.

Large pegs (60 ml, 42.8%) drunk within about an hour to reach each level, on average:

MEN	50 KG	60 KG	70 KG	80 KG	90 KG
Tipsy · 0.05%	1	1½	1½	1½	2
Drunk · 0.10%	2	2½	2½	3	3½
Blackout risk · 0.15%+	3	3½	4	4½	5

WOMEN	45 KG	55 KG	65 KG	75 KG	85 KG
Tipsy · 0.05%	1	1	1	1½	1½
Drunk · 0.10%	1½	1½	2	2½	2½
Blackout risk · 0.15%+	2	2½	3	3½	4

*Estimated with the Widmark formula. Women usually reach a higher BAC from the same drink because of differences in body water. Eating, drinking pace, genetics, medication and tolerance all change this a lot, so **read it as a line to stay under, not a target**. Your body clears only about 0.015% BAC per hour, roughly one standard drink an hour.*



PART IV

The Bar

Tools, glasses, pantry
and the six techniques

The Kit

Six tools. That's all a great home bar needs.



THE SHAKER

A three-piece shaker with a built-in strainer is the easiest to start with.



THE JIGGER

A double-ended measure, 30 and 60 ml. The secret to consistent drinks.



THE STRAINER

Holds back ice when you pour.



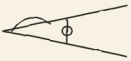
THE MUDDLER

Presses mint and lime for Mojitos and Caipiroskas.



THE BAR SPOON

Long and twisted, for stirring.



THE CITRUS PRESS

Fresh juice in seconds.

No kit yet? Improvise. A jar with a tight lid shakes, a tea strainer strains, and the end of a rolling pin muddles.

Glasses & Red Cups

At home, use glasses. In a rented flat, red cups are perfectly fine.



RED CUP
Every drink, any party



HIGHBALL
Long drinks, Mojitos



ROCKS
Sours, Old Fashioned



COUPE
Daiquiris, Sidecars



MARTINI
Martinis, Cosmos



MARGARITA
Margaritas



HURRICANE
Piña Coladas



WINE GLASS
Spritzes, G&Ts



FLUTE
Mimosas, French 75s

The Pantry

All ready-made and easy to find in any supermarket.

FIZZ

Coke or Thums Up · *rum drinks, Long Island*

Sprite or 7UP · *Blue Lagoon, fast pours*

Soda (Kinley, Bisleri) · *Mojito, highballs*

Schweppes tonic water · *G&T*

Schweppes Ginger Ale or ginger beer · *Mule, Stormy*

Grapefruit soda · *Paloma*

Dry sparkling wine · *Spritz, Mimosa, French 75*

JUICES

Orange, pineapple, cranberry · *the big three*

Tomato juice · *Bloody Mary*

Lychee juice · *Lychee Martini*

Coconut cream · *Piña Colada*

SYRUPS & SWEET

Sugar syrup · *the backbone of every sour*

Grenadine · *Sunrise, Hurricane*

Orgeat (almond) & passion fruit syrups · *Mai Tai, Hurricane*

Honey · *toddies*

FRESH

Limes & lemons · *always fresh, never bottled*

Mint, oranges, cucumber

Fresh cream, eggs

KITCHEN CUPBOARD

Coffee (espresso or instant) · *Espresso Martini, Irish Coffee*

Salt & caster sugar · *for rims*

Cloves & cinnamon · *toddies*

Worcestershire, hot sauce · *Bloody Mary*

Angostura bitters · *Old Fashioned, Manhattan*

Blue curaçao · *Blue Lagoon*

Ice is an ingredient. Allow 1 kg per guest. A cup packed with ice keeps the drink colder and less watery.

Measures & the Golden Ratio

BAR TERM	MILLILITRES	THINK OF IT AS
1 oz (ounce)	30 ml	a small peg
1½ oz (US shot)	45 ml	3 tablespoons
2 oz	60 ml	a large peg: the standard pour here
1 tablespoon	15 ml	
1 teaspoon	5 ml	
1 dash	about 1 ml	one quick flick of the bottle
1 lime	10–15 ml juice	2 limes ≈ 25 ml

THE GOLDEN RATIO

60 · 25 · 20

60 ml strong · 25 ml sour · 20 ml sweet. Shake, taste, adjust.

Learn this one formula and you know a whole family of classics:

STRONG	+ SOUR	+ SWEET	= YOU MADE
White rum	lime	sugar syrup	*Daiquiri*
Whisky	lemon	sugar syrup	*Whisky Sour*
Gin	lime	sugar syrup	*Gimlet*
Brandy	lemon	triple sec	*Sidecar*
Vodka	lime	triple sec	*Kamikaze*
Tequila	lime	triple sec	*Margarita*

Six Techniques

Every drink in this book uses one or two of these.

I BUILD

Make the drink straight in the glass or cup. Add ice, then the spirit, top with the mixer and stir once. Highballs, the G&T, the Cuba Libre.

II SHAKE

Shake anything with juice, cream, egg or syrup. Fill the shaker two-thirds with ice, close it tight and hold the lid. Shake hard for 10–15 seconds, until the metal is painfully cold.

III STIR

Stir drinks made only of spirits, like the Martini, Manhattan, Negroni and Old Fashioned. Stir with ice for 20–30 seconds. A little melted ice is part of the recipe.

IV MUDDLE

Press mint, lime or sugar in the bottom of a sturdy glass to release juice and oils. Be gentle with mint: shredded leaves taste bitter.

V BLEND

For frozen drinks, fill the blender jar no more than half with ice. Pulse, stir, then pulse again until smooth.

VI RIM

Wet only the *outside* of the rim with a lime wedge. Hold the glass sideways and sprinkle on salt or sugar while you turn it. No salt falls into the drink.

Ice, Citrus & the Garnish

✦

CHILL EVERYTHING

Keep mixers in the fridge. Put glasses in the freezer for ten minutes. A cold drink tastes better and stays fizzy longer.

SQUEEZE IT FRESH

Bottled lime juice makes drinks taste flat. Squeeze limes on the day you use them. This habit improves your drinks more than any expensive bottle.

GARNISH WITH PURPOSE



WEDGE & WHEEL
Cut 3–4 wedges per half lime.



THE TWIST
Squeeze the peel over the drink to spray its oil.



THE SPRIG
Slap the mint between your palms to wake up the aroma.

Busy night? Skip the garnish. At a packed house party, a lime wedge in a bowl next to the drinks is all the garnish you need. Save the umbrellas for a quieter evening.



PART V

The Cocktails

Forty-two classics, grouped by the bottle you'll open

Find Your Drink

The drinks are grouped by the bottle you'll use. Here they are A to Z.

Aperol Spritz 80
Bay Breeze 46
Bloody Mary 56
Blue Lagoon 49
Caipiroska 50
Cosmopolitan 54
Cuba Libre 35
Daiquiri 39
Dark 'n' Stormy 36
Espresso Martini 57
French 75 63
Gimlet 62
Gin & Tonic 60
Hot Toddy 37
Hurricane 42
Irish Coffee 69
Kamikaze 52
Lemon Drop 53
Long Island Iced Tea 55
Lychee Martini 51
Mai Tai 43
Manhattan 72
Margarita 74
Martini 64
Mimosa 81
Mint Julep 71
Mojito 40
Moscow Mule 48
Negroni 65
Old Fashioned 70
Paloma 75
Piña Colada 41
Rum Punch 38
Sangria 79
Screwdriver 45
Sex on the Beach 47
Sidecar 78
Tequila Sunrise 76
Tom Collins 61
Whisky Highball 67
Whisky Sour 68
White Russian 58

The Rum Drinks

From Old Monk & Coke to the Piña Colada.



THE BOTTLES

Old Monk XXX	₹410
Bacardi White	₹750

YOUR SHOPPING LIST

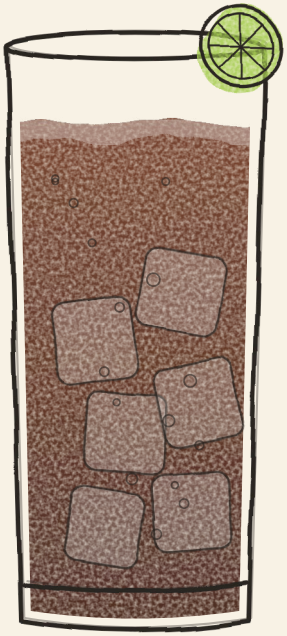
Coke · ginger beer · soda · limes · mint · sugar syrup · pineapple & orange juice · coconut cream · grenadine · passion fruit syrup · orgeat · honey · cloves & cinnamon

IN THIS CHAPTER

Cuba Libre 35
Dark 'n' Stormy 36
Hot Toddy 37
Rum Punch 38
Daiquiri 39
Mojito 40
Piña Colada 41
Hurricane 42
Mai Tai 43

Crisp







Easy

CUBA LIBRE

say it: KOO-bah LEE-bray

Rum and cola with a good squeeze of fresh lime.

60 ml rum

20 ml fresh lime juice

120 ml Coke or Thums Up

lime wedge

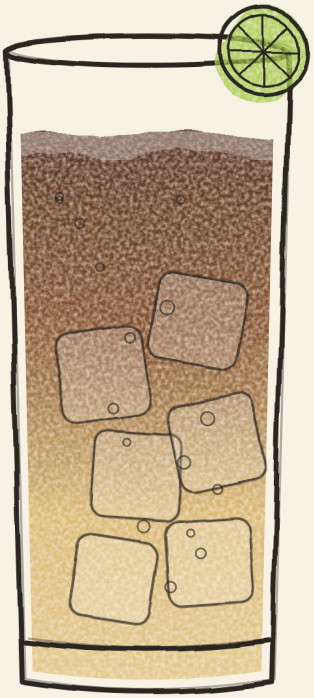
Fill the glass with ice. Add the rum and lime, top with cola, stir twice and drop in the wedge.

Its name means 'Free Cuba', a toast from Havana around 1900. The lime is what turns rum and cola into a proper cocktail.

ON THE SHELF	EQUAL TO	LEVEL
Old Monk XXX · ₹410	About 2 standard drinks	●○○

Spicy







Moody

DARK ‘N’ STORMY

say it: DARK-un STOR-mee

Dark rum floated on top of spicy ginger beer.

120 ml ginger beer (or Schweppes Ginger Ale)

60 ml dark rum

ice, lime wedge

Fill the glass with ice and add the ginger beer. Pour the rum slowly over the back of a spoon so it floats on top like a storm cloud.

Bermuda’s unofficial national drink. Old Monk’s vanilla-caramel depth suits it perfectly.

ON THE SHELF	EQUAL TO	LEVEL
Old Monk XXX · ₹410	About 2 standard drinks	●○○

Warming



Honeyed

HOT TODDY

say it: hot TOD-ee

A hot drink of spirit, honey, lemon and spices for cold nights.

45 ml dark rum, whisky or brandy

1 tbsp honey

15 ml fresh lemon juice

120 ml just-boiled water

2 cloves, cinnamon stick

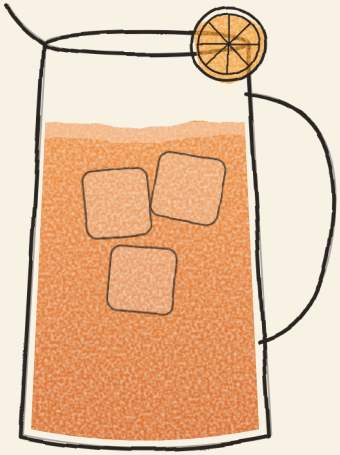
Stir the honey into the hot water until it dissolves. Add the spirit, lemon and spices, then wait a minute before sipping.

People have been drinking toddies since the 1700s, and they still work on a December night.

ON THE SHELF	EQUAL TO	LEVEL
Old Monk XXX · ₹410	About 1½ standard drinks	●○○

Party







Fruity

PARTY BATCH · SERVES 8

RUM PUNCH

say it: rum PUNCH

A big jug of rum, fruit juice, lime and sugar for a crowd.

480 ml dark rum

480 ml orange juice

240 ml pineapple juice

180 ml fresh lime juice

120 ml sugar syrup

240 ml soda, added at the end

Stir everything except the soda in a big jug and chill. Add the soda and plenty of ice just as guests arrive.

'Punch' is thought to come from the Hindi 'panch', meaning five, for its five ingredients. Sailors took the idea from India to the world.

ON THE SHELF	EQUAL TO	LEVEL
Old Monk XXX · ₹410	About 2 standard drinks *per glass*	●○○

Clean



Tart

DAIQUIRI

say it: DYE-kuh-ree

Not the frozen slushie. The original is just rum, lime and sugar shaken ice-cold: Cuba's classic sour.

60 ml white rum

25 ml fresh lime juice

20 ml sugar syrup

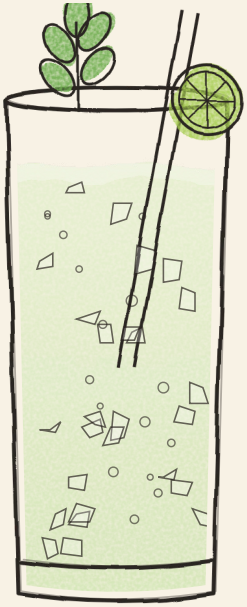
Shake hard with ice for 12 seconds and strain into a chilled coupe. Taste it, then adjust the syrup by 5 ml if you need to.

Named after a beach near Santiago de Cuba. Hemingway drank his at El Floridita, and every bartender still learns balance with this drink.

ON THE SHELF	EQUAL TO	LEVEL
Bacardi White · ₹750	About 2 standard drinks	●○○

Minty







Fresh

MOJITO

say it: moh-HEE-toh

White rum, lime, mint, sugar and soda over crushed ice.

10 mint leaves

20 ml sugar syrup

½ lime, in wedges

60 ml white rum

60 ml soda (Kinley or Bisleri)

crushed ice

Gently press the mint, syrup and lime. Bruise the mint but don't shred it. Fill with crushed ice, add the rum, stir from the bottom and top with soda.

Hemingway, so the story goes, had his Mojitos at La Bodeguita in Havana and his Daiquiris at El Floridita.

ON THE SHELF	EQUAL TO	LEVEL
Bacardi White · ₹750	About 2 standard drinks	●●○

Creamy







Island

PIÑA COLADA

say it: PEEN-yah koh-LAH-dah

Rum, pineapple and coconut cream, blended or shaken. Creamy and tropical.

60 ml white rum

90 ml pineapple juice

45 ml coconut cream

1 cup ice

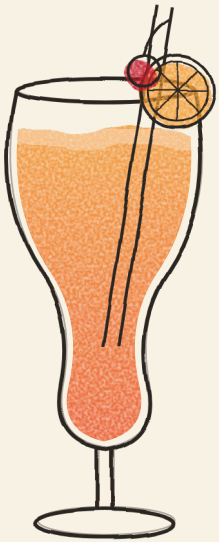
Blend everything until smooth and slushy, or shake hard and strain over crushed ice. Garnish with pineapple, a cherry and an umbrella.

Ramón 'Monchito' Marrero created it at the Caribe Hilton in San Juan in 1954. It has been Puerto Rico's national drink since 1978.

ON THE SHELF	EQUAL TO	LEVEL
Bacardi White · ₹750	About 2 standard drinks	●○○

Tropical







Punchy

HURRICANE

say it: HUR-ih-kun

A sweet, fruity rum punch with passion fruit, orange and lime.

30 ml white rum

30 ml dark rum

30 ml passion fruit syrup

30 ml orange juice

15 ml fresh lime juice

5 ml grenadine

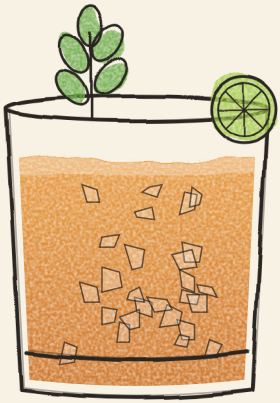
Shake everything with ice and strain into a tall glass full of fresh ice. Add an orange slice and a cherry. No passion fruit syrup? Use pineapple juice.

Pat O'Brien's bar in New Orleans served it in glasses shaped like hurricane lamps. It still draws a crowd.

ON THE SHELF	EQUAL TO	LEVEL
Bacardi White · ₹750 Old Monk XXX · ₹410	About 2 standard drinks	●●○

Nutty







Tropical

MAI TAI

say it: MY tie

A tropical rum sour with orange liqueur and orgeat, a sweet almond syrup.

30 ml white rum

30 ml dark rum

15 ml triple sec

15 ml orgeat (almond syrup)

25 ml fresh lime juice

Shake everything with ice and strain over crushed ice. Garnish with a big sprig of mint. No orgeat? Use sugar syrup with two drops of almond essence.

Trader Vic served the first one in 1944. One taste and his Tahitian guest said 'Maita'i roa ae', meaning 'out of this world'.

ON THE SHELF	EQUAL TO	LEVEL
Bacardi White · ₹750 Old Monk XXX · ₹410 + more	About 2½ standard drinks	●●○

The Vodka Drinks

The easiest spirit to mix, from juice-and-vodka to the Cosmo.



THE BOTTLES

Magic Moments	₹530
Smirnoff	₹810
Onsra Zest Triple Sec	₹1,130
Bandarful Coffee Liqueur	₹1,570
Archers Peach Schnapps	₹2,980

YOUR SHOPPING LIST

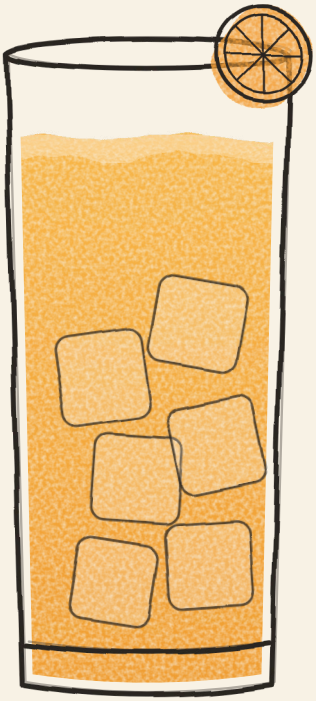
Orange, cranberry, pineapple, lychee & tomato juice · Sprite · ginger beer · limes & lemons · sugar syrup · blue curaçao · peach schnapps · espresso · fresh cream · Worcestershire & hot sauce

IN THIS CHAPTER

Screwdriver	45	Kamikaze	52
Bay Breeze	46	Lemon Drop	53
Sex on the Beach	47	Cosmopolitan	54
Moscow Mule	48	Long Island Iced Tea	55
Blue Lagoon	49	Bloody Mary	56
Caipiroska	50	Espresso Martini	57
Lychee Martini	51	White Russian	58

Sunny







Simple

CLASSIC · 1940S

SCREWDRIVER

say it: SKROO-dry-ver

Vodka and orange juice. That's it.

60 ml vodka

120 ml fresh orange juice

ice, orange slice

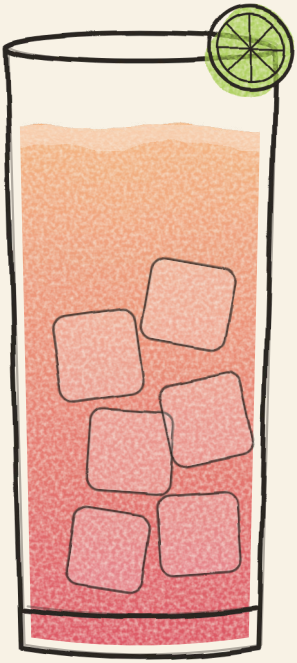
Pour the vodka and juice over ice and stir. Freshly squeezed juice makes all the difference.

Legend says oil workers stirred it with whatever tool was to hand.

ON THE SHELF	EQUAL TO	LEVEL
Magic Moments Vodka · ₹530	About 2 standard drinks	●○○

Tart







Tropical

CLASSIC · 1980S

BAY BREEZE

say it: BAY breez

Vodka with cranberry and pineapple juice.

60 ml vodka (or white rum)

90 ml cranberry juice

45 ml pineapple juice

ice, lime wedge

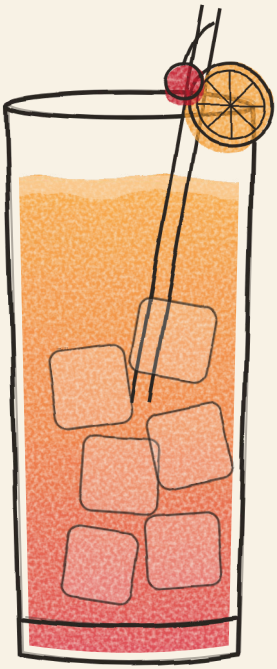
Build over ice and stir. Leave out the pineapple and it's a Cape Codder.

The Sea Breeze uses grapefruit. Swap in pineapple and it's the friendlier Bay Breeze, which is easier to shop for too.

ON THE SHELF	EQUAL TO	LEVEL
Magic Moments Vodka · ₹530	About 2 standard drinks	●○○

Fruity







Sunset

SEX ON THE BEACH

say it: sex on the BEECH

Vodka, peach, orange and cranberry, layered to look like a sunset.

45 ml vodka

20 ml peach schnapps

60 ml orange juice

60 ml cranberry juice

Pour the vodka, peach schnapps and orange over ice and stir. Slowly pour the cranberry on top to make the sunset. No schnapps? Use 15 ml peach syrup.

It's a 1980s Florida beach-bar original, and it still sells out at every party.

ON THE SHELF	EQUAL TO	LEVEL
Magic Moments Vodka · ₹530 Archers Peach Schnapps · ₹2,980 ✦	About 2 standard drinks	●○○

Gingery







Fizzy

MOSCOW MULE

say it: MOS-koh MYOOL

Vodka, lime and spicy ginger beer.

60 ml vodka

20 ml fresh lime juice

120 ml ginger beer (or Schweppes Ginger Ale)

ice, lime wedge

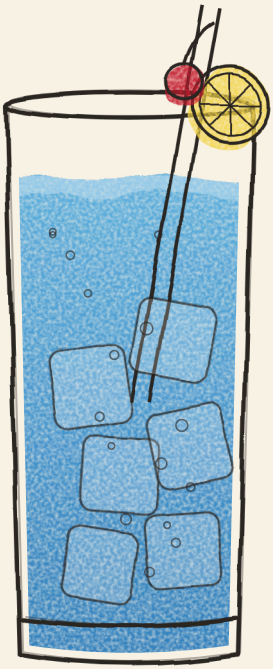
Fill a copper mug or tall glass with ice. Add the vodka and lime, top with ginger beer and stir once.

It was created to sell vodka to Americans at the Cock 'n' Bull in Los Angeles, and the copper mugs became part of the legend.

ON THE SHELF	EQUAL TO	LEVEL
Smirnoff · ₹810	About 2 standard drinks	●○○

Electric







Citrus

BLUE LAGOON

say it: bloo luh-GOON

Vodka and Sprite with blue curaçao, an orange-flavoured liqueur dyed bright blue.

45 ml vodka

20 ml blue curaçao

120 ml Sprite or 7UP

ice, lemon wheel, cherry

Fill a tall glass with ice. Pour in the vodka and blue curaçao, top with Sprite and stir once.

Usually credited to Andy MacElhone at Harry's Bar in Paris. It's the most photographed drink at any party, and the easiest to make.

ON THE SHELF	EQUAL TO	LEVEL
Magic Moments Vodka · ₹530	About 2 standard drinks	●○○

Zesty







Bold

CLASSIC · BRAZIL

CAIPIROSKA

say it: kai-pee-ROSS-kah

Crushed lime and sugar with vodka over crushed ice. Simple, sharp and strong.

½ lime, cut into small wedges

2 tsp caster sugar

60 ml vodka

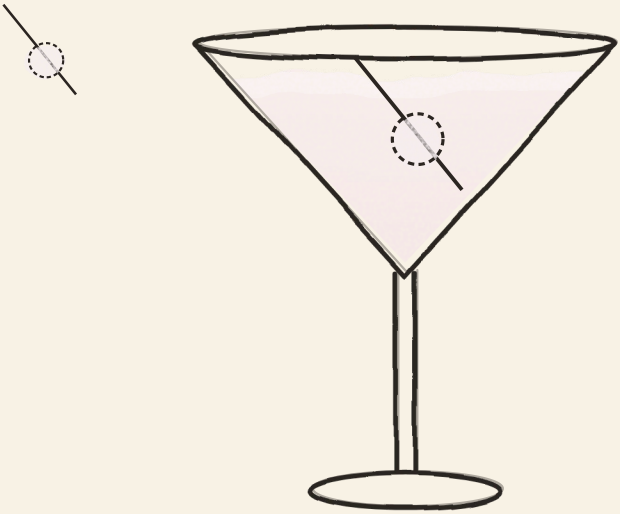
crushed ice

Press the lime and sugar hard in a sturdy glass until all the juice is out. Fill with crushed ice, add the vodka and stir well.

This is the vodka version of Brazil's national drink, the Caipirinha, which is made with cachaça, a sugarcane spirit.

ON THE SHELF	EQUAL TO	LEVEL
Magic Moments Vodka · ₹530	About 2 standard drinks	●○○

Floral



Silky

LYCHEE MARTINI

say it: LY-chee mar-TEE-nee

Vodka shaken with lychee juice and lime. Light, floral and sweet.

60 ml vodka

60 ml lychee juice

15 ml fresh lime juice

10 ml sugar syrup (optional)

Shake hard with ice and strain into a chilled martini glass. Garnish with a lychee on a pick.

Pan-Asian restaurants made it a favourite in the 1990s. Fragrant, pale and easy to drink.

ON THE SHELF	EQUAL TO	LEVEL
Magic Moments Vodka · ₹530	About 2 standard drinks	●○○

Sharp



Quick

MODERN CLASSIC · 1970S

KAMIKAZE

say it: kah-mee-KAH-zee

Vodka, orange liqueur and lime, shaken. Like a vodka Margarita.

60 ml vodka

15 ml triple sec

15 ml fresh lime juice

Shake hard with ice and strain into a chilled glass. Think of it as a Margarita made with vodka.

It started life as a shooter. Now it's served as a proper sipping cocktail.

ON THE SHELF	EQUAL TO	LEVEL
Magic Moments Vodka · ₹530 Onsra Zest Triple Sec · ₹1,130	About 2½ standard drinks	●○○

Sweet-sour



Candy

LEMON DROP

say it: LEM-un drop

A sweet-and-sour lemon vodka cocktail in a sugar-rimmed glass.

60 ml citrus vodka

15 ml triple sec

15 ml fresh lemon juice

caster sugar for the rim

Rim the glass with sugar. Shake the rest with ice and strain in. It tastes like lemon sherbet.

Born in 1970s San Francisco and a Christmas-party favourite ever since.

ON THE SHELF	EQUAL TO	LEVEL
Smirnoff · ₹810 Onsra Zest Triple Sec · ₹1,130	About 2½ standard drinks	●○○

Tart



Pink

COSMOPOLITAN

say it: koz-muh-POL-ih-tun

A pink vodka sour with cranberry and orange liqueur. A sour is any drink of spirit, citrus and something sweet.

45 ml vodka (citrus vodka is best)

20 ml triple sec

30 ml cranberry juice

15 ml fresh lime juice

Shake hard with ice and strain into a chilled martini glass. Squeeze an orange peel over the top.

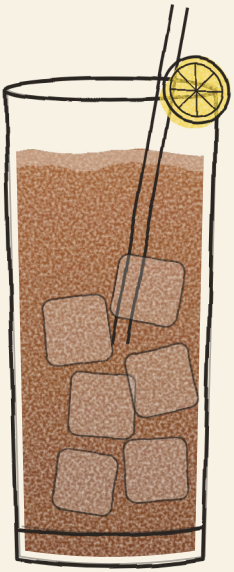
New York and Miami bartenders each claim it. The 1990s made it the most famous pink drink in the world.

ON THE SHELF
Smirnoff · ₹810
Onsra Zest Triple Sec · ₹1,130

EQUAL TO
About 2 standard drinks

LEVEL
●●○

Strong



Deceptive

LONG ISLAND ICED TEA

say it: long EYE-lund eyest TEE

Five spirits, lemon and a splash of cola. It looks like iced tea but contains no tea, and it's very strong.

15 ml each vodka, gin, white rum, tequila

15 ml triple sec

25 ml fresh lemon juice

15 ml sugar syrup

60 ml Coke, to top

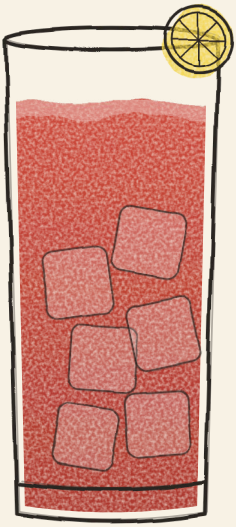
Shake everything except the cola with ice. Strain into a tall glass of ice and top with a splash of cola. No tequila? Use 30 ml vodka.

It contains no tea, just five spirits. One glass holds more alcohol than a large peg, and it goes down fast, so sip slowly.

ON THE SHELF	EQUAL TO	LEVEL
Magic Moments Vodka · ₹530 Greater Than Gin · ₹1,100 + more	About 2½ standard drinks	●●○

Savoury







Spicy

BLOODY MARY

say it: BLUD-ee MAIR-ee

Vodka and spiced tomato juice. It's savoury, not sweet, and the classic brunch drink.

60 ml vodka

120 ml tomato juice

15 ml fresh lemon juice

3 dashes Worcestershire sauce

2 dashes hot sauce

pinch salt and black pepper

Add everything to a glass full of ice and stir well with a long spoon. Taste, adjust the spice, and garnish with a lemon wedge.

Usually credited to Fernand Petiot at Harry's New York Bar in Paris. It's the classic brunch drink and a famous next-morning cure.

ON THE SHELF	EQUAL TO	LEVEL
Magic Moments Vodka · ₹530	About 2 standard drinks	●○○

Velvety



Wide awake

ESPRESSO MARTINI

say it: es-PRESS-oh mar-TEE-nee

Vodka, coffee liqueur and fresh espresso, shaken hard into a foamy coffee cocktail.

45 ml vodka

20 ml coffee liqueur

30 ml fresh espresso, cooled

10 ml sugar syrup

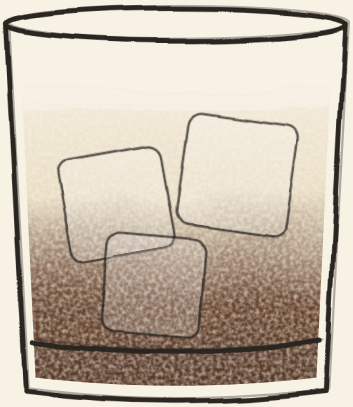
Shake very hard with plenty of ice. That's what makes the foam. Strain into a chilled glass and float three coffee beans. No machine? Use 2 tsp instant coffee in 30 ml hot water.

Dick Bradsell created it in 1980s London for a guest who wanted a drink to wake her up. Now every bar serves one.

ON THE SHELF	EQUAL TO	LEVEL
Smirnoff · ₹810 Bandarful Coffee Liqueur · ₹1,570	About 2 standard drinks	●●○

Creamy







Mellow

CLASSIC · 1960S

WHITE RUSSIAN

say it: wyte RUSH-un

Vodka, coffee liqueur and cream over ice.

60 ml vodka

30 ml coffee liqueur

30 ml fresh cream

Pour the vodka and coffee liqueur over ice, then float the cream on top. Leave out the cream and it's a Black Russian.

The Dude drinks almost nothing else in The Big Lebowski.

ON THE SHELF	EQUAL TO	LEVEL
Smirnoff · ₹810 Bandarful Coffee Liqueur · ₹1,570	About 2½ standard drinks	●○○

The Gin Drinks

Crisp, botanical and very grown-up.



THE BOTTLES

Greater Than	₹1,100
Tanqueray	₹1,790
Campari	₹2,290
Ottos Athens Vermouth	₹2,500

YOUR SHOPPING LIST

Schweppes tonic · soda · limes & lemons · sugar syrup · cucumber · sparkling wine · olives · oranges

IN THIS CHAPTER

Gin & Tonic 60
Tom Collins 61
Gimlet 62
French 75 63
Martini 64
Negroni 65

Bitter



Crisp

GIN & TONIC

say it: JIN-and-TON-ik

Gin topped up with tonic water, a bitter, fizzy mixer. The world's favourite long drink.

60 ml gin

150 ml cold Schweppes tonic water

lime wedge or cucumber ribbon

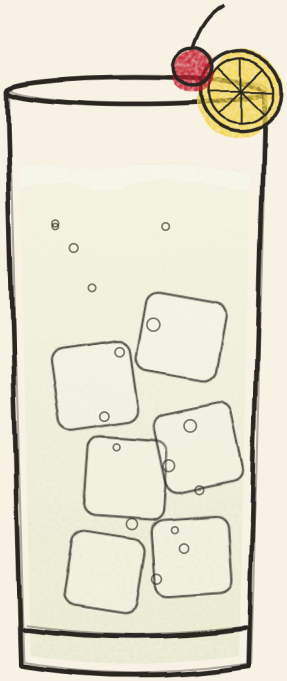
Pack a large glass with ice. Add the gin, then pour the tonic gently down the side so it keeps its fizz. Stir once.

It started in India. British officers took bitter quinine tonic to ward off malaria and mixed in gin to make it go down easier.

ON THE SHELF	EQUAL TO	LEVEL
Greater Than Gin · ₹1,100	About 2 standard drinks	●○○

Fizzy







Lemony

CLASSIC · 1870S

TOM COLLINS

say it: tom KOL-inz

A gin sour topped up with soda. Lemonade for grown-ups.

60 ml gin

25 ml fresh lemon juice

20 ml sugar syrup

90 ml soda (Kinley or Bisleri)

Shake the gin, lemon and syrup with ice. Strain into a tall glass of fresh ice, top with soda and stir once.

In 1874, New Yorkers played a famous practical joke, telling friends a 'Tom Collins' was going around insulting them. Bartenders made the name a drink.

ON THE SHELF	EQUAL TO	LEVEL
Greater Than Gin · ₹1,100	About 2 standard drinks	●○○

Sharp







Clean

GIMLET

say it: GIM-lit

Gin, lime and sugar, shaken cold. A gin sour.

60 ml gin

20 ml fresh lime juice

15 ml sugar syrup

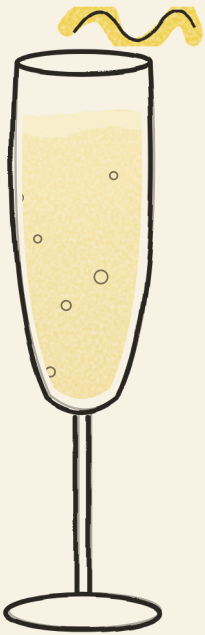
Shake hard with ice and strain into a chilled coupe. It's simple, and that's why it's so good.

British sailors were given lime to prevent scurvy, and somebody had the bright idea of adding gin.

ON THE SHELF	EQUAL TO	LEVEL
Greater Than Gin · ₹1,100	About 2 standard drinks	●○○

Sparkling







Celebratory

FRENCH 75

say it: french SEV-en-tee-FIVE

A gin sour topped with sparkling wine. Bright, bubbly and made for celebrating.

30 ml gin

15 ml fresh lemon juice

10 ml sugar syrup

90 ml chilled sparkling wine

Shake the gin, lemon and syrup with ice. Strain into a flute and top slowly with the sparkling wine.

Named after a French First World War field gun, because it was said to hit just as hard.

ON THE SHELF	EQUAL TO	LEVEL
Greater Than Gin · ₹1,100	About 2 standard drinks	●●○

Dry



Elegant

MARTINI

say it: mar-TEE-nee

Ice-cold gin with a touch of dry vermouth. Strong, dry and elegant.

60 ml gin

10 ml dry vermouth

olive or lemon twist

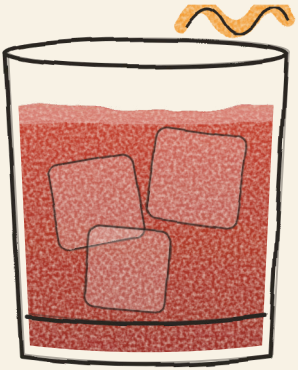
Stir with plenty of ice for 30 seconds and strain into a frozen glass. Bond ordered his shaken, but stirred is silkier.

More has been written about this drink than any other. The less vermouth you use, the 'drier' it is.

ON THE SHELF	EQUAL TO	LEVEL
Tanqueray · ₹1,790	About 2 standard drinks	●●●

Bittersweet







Grown-up

NEGRONI

say it: neh-GROH-nee

Equal parts gin, Campari (a bitter red Italian aperitif) and sweet vermouth. Bittersweet and strong.

30 ml gin

30 ml Campari

30 ml sweet vermouth

orange peel

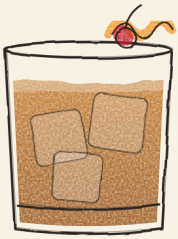
Stir all three with ice in the serving glass for 20 seconds. Twist the orange peel over the top.

Count Camillo Negroni asked his bartender to replace the soda in his Americano with gin. It's equal parts and impossible to get wrong.

ON THE SHELF	EQUAL TO	LEVEL
Greater Than Gin · ₹1,100 Campari · ₹2,290 ✦ + more	About 2 standard drinks	●○○

The Whisky Drinks

From the humble highball to the Manhattan.



THE BOTTLES

Antiquity Blue	₹880
Jim Beam	₹1,540
Teacher's Highland Cream	₹1,550
Black Dog Centenary	₹1,580

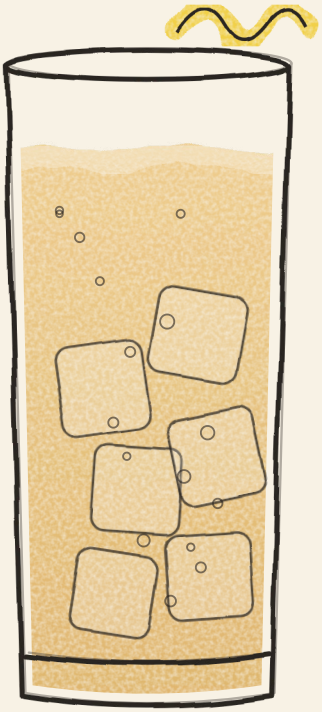
YOUR SHOPPING LIST

Soda · lemons · sugar syrup · eggs · coffee · fresh cream · mint · oranges · Angostura bitters

IN THIS CHAPTER

Whisky Highball 67
Whisky Sour 68
Irish Coffee 69
Old Fashioned 70
Mint Julep 71
Manhattan 72

Crisp



Easy

CLASSIC · 1890S

WHISKY HIGHBALL

say it: WIS-kee HY-bawl

Whisky and cold soda with a twist of lemon peel.

60 ml whisky

150 ml chilled soda (Kinley or Bisleri)

lemon peel

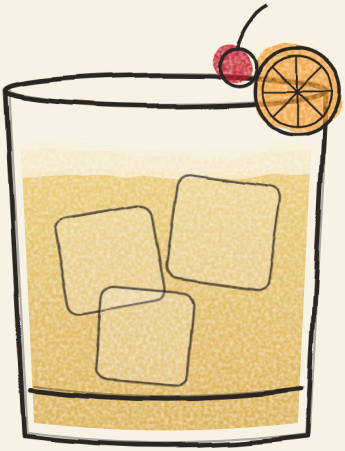
Fill a tall glass with ice, add the whisky and soda and stir once. Twist the lemon peel over the top so its oil sprays across the drink.

Japan made it an art form. It's still the most refined way to drink a good blend.

ON THE SHELF	EQUAL TO	LEVEL
Teacher's Highland Cream · ₹1,550	About 2 standard drinks	●○○

Silky







Tangy

CLASSIC · 1860S

WHISKY SOUR

say it: WIS-kee SOW-er

Whisky, lemon and sugar, often shaken with egg white for a silky foam.

60 ml whisky

25 ml fresh lemon juice

20 ml sugar syrup

1 egg white (optional, for foam)

With egg white, shake once without ice and again with ice. Strain over fresh ice and garnish with orange and a cherry.

It was printed in the first bartender's guide in 1862. A good sour makes any whisky taste smooth.

ON THE SHELF	EQUAL TO	LEVEL
Antiquity Blue · ₹880	About 2 standard drinks	●●○

Rich







Cosy

IRISH COFFEE

say it: EYE-rish KOF-ee

Hot, sweetened coffee with whiskey under a float of cream.

45 ml Irish whiskey such as Bushmills (or any whisky)

15 ml sugar syrup

120 ml hot strong coffee

lightly whipped cream

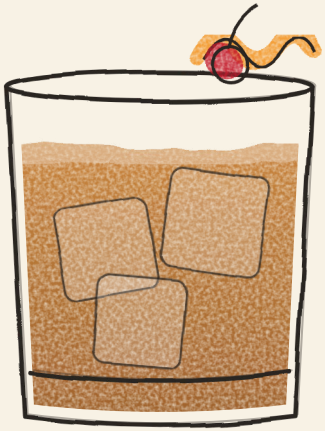
Stir the whiskey, syrup and coffee in a warm glass mug. Spoon softly whipped cream over the back of a spoon so it floats. Don't stir.

Joe Sheridan first made it at an Irish airport for passengers coming in from the cold. You drink the coffee through the cream.

ON THE SHELF	EQUAL TO	LEVEL
Bushmills Original · ₹2,025 ✦ *or Antiquity Blue · ₹880*	About 1½ standard drinks	●●○

Warm







Slow

CLASSIC · 1800S

OLD FASHIONED

say it: old FASH-und

Whisky stirred with a little sugar and bitters, a concentrated herbal flavouring used by the drop. The original cocktail.

60 ml whisky

10 ml sugar syrup

3 dashes Angostura bitters

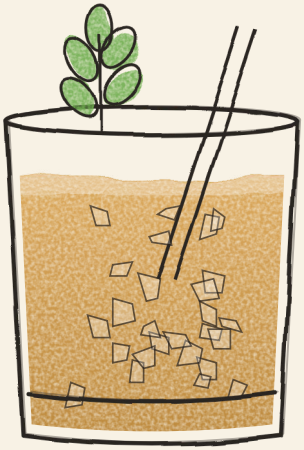
orange peel, cherry

Stir the whisky, syrup and bitters over one big ice cube for 30 seconds. Twist the orange peel over the top and drop it in.

It follows the first-ever definition of a cocktail from 1806: spirit, sugar, water and bitters. It was called 'old-fashioned' even then.

ON THE SHELF	EQUAL TO	LEVEL
Black Dog Centenary · ₹1,580	About 2 standard drinks	●●○

Minty



Frosty

MINT JULEP

say it: mint JOO-lep

Whisky, mint and sugar over a heap of crushed ice.

8 mint leaves

15 ml sugar syrup

60 ml bourbon or whisky

lots of crushed ice

Gently press the mint with the syrup. Pack the glass with crushed ice, pour over the whisky, stir until the glass frosts and crown it with more ice and mint.

It's the official drink of the Kentucky Derby, where more than a hundred thousand are served over race weekend.

ON THE SHELF	EQUAL TO	LEVEL
Jim Beam · ₹1,540 *or Antiquity Blue · ₹880*	About 2 standard drinks	●●○

Rich



Smooth

CLASSIC · NEW YORK, 1870S

MANHATTAN

say it: man-HAT-un

Whisky stirred with sweet vermouth (an aromatic, wine-based aperitif) and bitters. Rich and strong.

60 ml whisky

30 ml sweet vermouth

2 dashes Angostura bitters

cherry

Stir with ice for 30 seconds until it's very cold. Strain into a chilled coupe and drop in the cherry.

One of the first cocktails made with vermouth. It's the drink that taught a city to stir.

ON THE SHELF	EQUAL TO	LEVEL
Black Dog Centenary · ₹1,580 Ottos Athens Vermouth · ₹2,500 ✦	About 2½ standard drinks	●●○

The Tequila Drinks

Three Mexican classics, one bottle.



THE BOTTLES

Casco Viejo Silver	₹2,250
Onsra Zest Triple Sec	₹1,130

YOUR SHOPPING LIST

Limes · salt · grapefruit soda · orange juice · grenadine

IN THIS CHAPTER

Margarita 74
Paloma 75
Tequila Sunrise 76

Salty



Zesty

MARGARITA

say it: mar-guh-REE-tuh

Tequila, orange liqueur and lime, served in a salt-rimmed glass.

50 ml silver tequila

20 ml triple sec

25 ml fresh lime juice

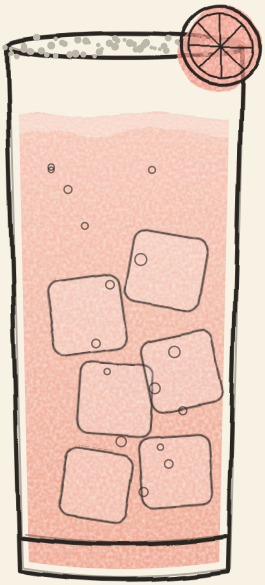
flaky salt for the rim

Salt only the outside of the rim. Shake the rest hard with ice and strain into the glass.

Dozens of people claim to have invented it. One story names Margarita Sames, a Texas socialite, in the 1940s.

ON THE SHELF	EQUAL TO	LEVEL
Casco Viejo Silver Tequila · ₹2,250 ✦ Onsra Zest Triple Sec · ₹1,130	About 2 standard drinks	●●○

Refreshing



Salty

PALOMA

say it: pah-LOH-mah

Tequila with grapefruit soda, lime and a pinch of salt. Mexico's favourite highball.

50 ml tequila

15 ml fresh lime juice

pinch salt

120 ml grapefruit soda

Salt half the rim. Add the tequila, lime and a pinch of salt to a glass of ice, top with grapefruit soda and stir. No grapefruit soda? Use Sprite with a splash of orange juice.

In Mexico it's more popular than the Margarita. It's long, light and very easy to drink in the heat.

ON THE SHELF	EQUAL TO	LEVEL
Casco Viejo Silver Tequila · ₹2,250 ✦	About 1½ standard drinks	●○○

Showy



Sweet

CLASSIC · 1970S

TEQUILA SUNRISE

say it: teh-KEE-lah SUN-rize

Tequila and orange juice, with grenadine (a red pomegranate syrup) sinking to the bottom.

50 ml tequila

120 ml orange juice

15 ml grenadine

Pour the tequila and orange juice over ice and stir. Then pour the grenadine down the inside of the glass so it sinks. Don't stir again.

The Rolling Stones drank it on their 1972 tour and made it famous. Made with vodka, it's a Vodka Sunrise.

ON THE SHELF	EQUAL TO	LEVEL
Casco Viejo Silver Tequila · ₹2,250 ✦ *or vodka · from ₹530*	About 1½ standard drinks	●○○

Brandy, Wine & Bubbles

Lighter drinks for brunches and long evenings.



THE BOTTLES

Morpheus XO Brandy	₹840
Aperol	₹2,020

YOUR SHOPPING LIST

Dry red wine · sparkling wine · orange juice · lemons · oranges & apples · Sprite · soda · sugar

IN THIS CHAPTER

Sidecar 78
Sangria 79
Aperol Spritz 80
Mimosa 81

Silky







Citrus

SIDECAR

say it: SIDE-kar

Brandy, orange liqueur and lemon, shaken. A brandy sour.

60 ml brandy

15 ml triple sec

15 ml fresh lemon juice

sugar for the rim

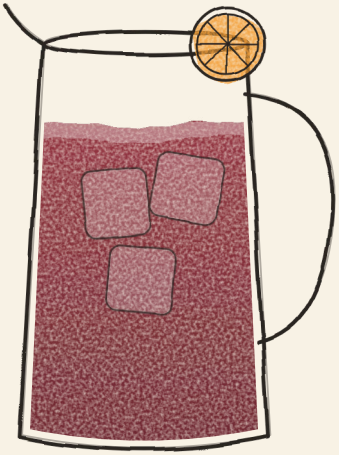
Rim the glass with sugar. Shake the rest with ice and strain in. For a softer drink, use 50 ml brandy and 20 ml triple sec.

It's said to be named after a First World War officer who arrived at his Paris bar in a motorcycle sidecar.

ON THE SHELF	EQUAL TO	LEVEL
Morpheus XO Brandy · ₹840 Onsra Zest Triple Sec · ₹1,130	About 2½ standard drinks	●●○

Fruity







Easy-going

SANGRIA

say it: san-GREE-ah

A Spanish jug of red wine, brandy, fruit and fizz.

750 ml dry red wine

90 ml brandy

60 ml triple sec

60 ml sugar syrup

1 orange and 1 apple, sliced

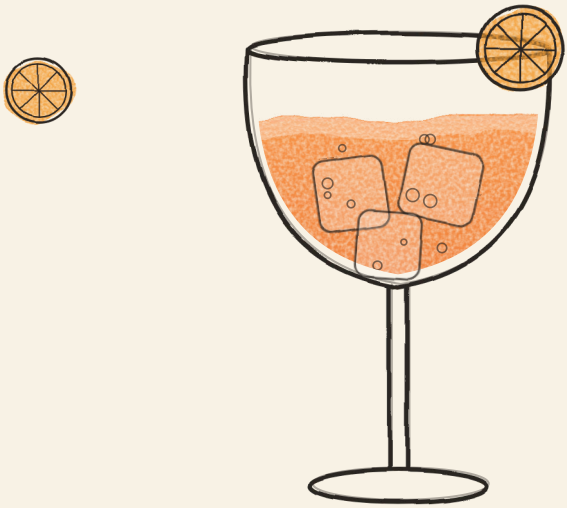
150 ml Sprite or 7UP, at the end

Combine everything except the soda in a jug and chill for 2–4 hours. Add the soda and ice when you pour.

It's named after the Spanish word for blood. It's the easiest way to serve eight people at once.

ON THE SHELF	EQUAL TO	LEVEL
Morpheus XO Brandy · ₹840 Onsra Zest Triple Sec · ₹1,130	About 1½ standard drinks *per glass*	●○○

Bittersweet



Sunny

APEROL SPRITZ

say it: AH-per-ol SPRITZ

Aperol is a bright-orange Italian aperitif, a light, bittersweet pre-dinner drink of only 11% alcohol. Mixed with bubbly and soda, it's the classic summer sipper.

90 ml chilled sparkling wine

60 ml Aperol

30 ml soda (Kinley or Bisleri)

lots of ice, orange slice

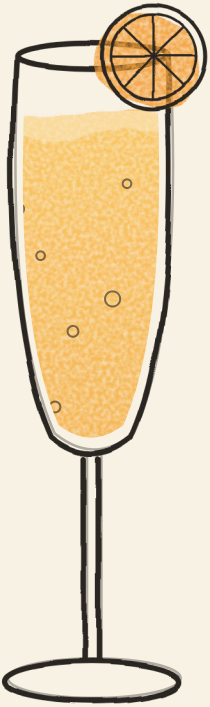
Fill a wine glass with ice. Pour the sparkling wine, then the Aperol, then the soda. Stir once gently and add the orange.

This is northern Italy's early-evening ritual. Remember the 3-2-1 rule: three parts bubbles, two parts Aperol, one part soda.

ON THE SHELF	EQUAL TO	LEVEL
Aperol · ₹2,020 ✦	About 1½ standard drinks	●○○

Bright







Brunch

MIMOSA

say it: mih-MOH-suh

Equal parts orange juice and sparkling wine. The world's favourite brunch drink.

75 ml fresh orange juice, chilled

75 ml chilled sparkling wine

Pour the orange juice into a flute, then top slowly with the sparkling wine. No stirring needed.

Usually credited to the Ritz in Paris in the 1920s. It's the world's favourite brunch drink.

ON THE SHELF	EQUAL TO	LEVEL
Any dry sparkling wine	About ½ standard drink	●○○



PART VI

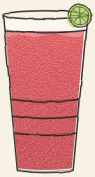
Party Pace

Fast pours and big batches
for busy nights

Ten Fast Pours

No shaker. No garnish. Ten seconds each.

The rule: fill a cup with ice, add one measured spirit, top with one mixer and add a squeeze of lime. Classic, tasty and fast enough for a packed room.



1 **Old Monk & Coke**
60 ml Old Monk · 120 ml Coke or Thums Up · squeeze of lime
The lime makes it a Cuba Libre.

2 **Vodka Sprite**
60 ml vodka · 120 ml Sprite · squeeze of lime
Crisp, easy, and everyone likes it.

3 **Vodka Cranberry**
60 ml vodka · 120 ml cranberry juice
The Cape Codder, minus the fuss.

4 **Screwdriver**
60 ml vodka · 120 ml orange juice
A brunch-to-midnight classic.

5 **Gin & Tonic**
60 ml gin · 150 ml Schweppes tonic · lime wedge
Lots of ice, and pour the tonic down the side.

6 **Whisky Soda**
60 ml whisky · 150 ml soda
India's favourite drink, done right: cold soda and plenty of ice.

7 **Whisky Ginger**
60 ml whisky · 120 ml Schweppes Ginger Ale
Spicy, sweet and smooth. Bushmills shines here.

8 **Vodka Ginger**
60 ml vodka · 120 ml ginger ale · squeeze of lime
A lazy Moscow Mule.

9 **Rum Pineapple**
60 ml white rum · 120 ml pineapple juice
A lazy Piña Colada. Add a splash of coconut cream if you have it.

10 **Rum & Sprite**
60 ml white rum · 120 ml Sprite · squeeze of lime
A party favourite across India.

Each fast pour holds one large peg: about 26 ml of pure alcohol, or two standard drinks. Late in the night, switch to 45 ml.

Big Batches for Twenty

Make it before the doorbell rings. Each serves 20.

PARTY RUM PUNCH

serves 20

1.2 L Old Monk (about 1½ bottles) · 1.2 L orange juice · 600 ml pineapple juice · 450 ml fresh lime juice (about 35 limes) · 300 ml sugar syrup · 600 ml soda, added last

Stir everything except the soda in a drinks dispenser and chill. Add the soda and ice as guests arrive.

PITCHER MOJITO

serves 20

1.2 L Bacardi White · 450 ml fresh lime juice · 400 ml sugar syrup · 2 big bunches of mint, lightly crushed · 1.5 L soda, added last

Stir the rum, lime, syrup and mint in jugs and chill. Pour over crushed ice in cups, about two-thirds full, then top with soda.

BATCHING LIKE A PRO

- Use a drinks dispenser with a tap, or two big jugs. Label them.
- **Add fizz and ice last**, or the batch goes flat and watery.
- Keep batches in the fridge until you need them. Keep the ice in a cooler box, not in the batch.
- Each cup holds about one large peg of spirit, or two standard drinks. Set out a water jug beside every batch.

More Batches for Twenty

BIG-BATCH MARGARITA

serves 20

1 L tequila · 400 ml triple sec · 500 ml fresh lime juice · 200 ml sugar syrup · 500 ml cold water

The water stands in for the ice melt from shaking. Chill well and pour over ice. Salt the rims of a stack of cups beforehand if you like.

PITCHER MOSCOW MULE

serves 20

1.2 L vodka · 400 ml fresh lime juice · 2.4 L ginger beer or Schweppes Ginger Ale, added last · lime slices

Mix the vodka and lime in a dispenser and chill. Add the ginger beer and plenty of ice just before serving.

SANGRIA FOR TWENTY

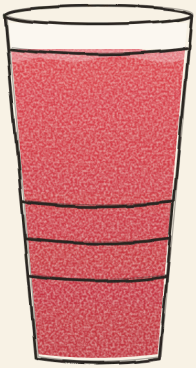
serves 20

1.9 L dry red wine (2½ bottles) · 225 ml brandy · 150 ml triple sec · 150 ml sugar syrup · 3 oranges and 3 apples, sliced · 375 ml Sprite, added last

Make it 2–4 hours ahead so the fruit soaks. Add the Sprite and ice as you pour.

The Red Cup Rules

The unofficial glassware of every house party.



The lines are popularly said to mark a shot, a glass of wine and a beer. They're handy, but check your own cups with a jigger.

1. Measure, don't eyeball. A big cup makes a normal pour look tiny, so people over-pour without realising. Keep a jigger at the bar.

2. Ice to the top. A cup full of ice keeps the drink cold. A half-full cup of warm Coke is sad.

3. Write names on cups. Leave out a marker. You'll use half as many cups and wash nothing.

4. Three cups per guest. Allow 60–80 cups for twenty people, plus a separate stack for water.

5. Double-cup hot drinks. Plastic cups get hot fast. Use two for a toddy or Irish Coffee.

6. Never leave a cup unattended. If you've walked away from it, pour a fresh one.

"The first drink breaks the ice.
This book makes sure it's a good one."

From the Daiquiri to the Espresso Martini, forty-two classic cocktails, each explained in plain words and drawn by hand: how to say its name, what's in it, how to make it and the story behind it.

Plus ten fast pours for busy nights, big batches for twenty, and an honest guide to every bottle on the shelf in Delhi and Gurgaon, from ₹400 to ₹7,000.

Soham Garg