

# Tips On Shaking Up The Classics



Don't think that just because a recipe has been around for more than a century that there's no room for improvement. Consider if you will the venerable Old Fashion. Several revamped versions of this timeless classic have snuck into the contemporary limelight.

About the most ingenious twist on the ageless standard is called the **Santa Anita Old Fashion**, which combines muddled fresh raspberries, an orange slice, simple syrup and bitters to accompany the bourbon. The addition of the raspberries adds a zesty flavor not found in the original. The effect is sensational.

The **Georgia Old Fashion** is appropriately named. Its recipe substitutes a fresh peach slice for the orange slice in the muddled base mix. The flavor of the peach and bourbon is an unbeatable combination. Which raises the question—why hasn't anyone thought of it before?

Why indeed. For those with the natural desire to not leave well enough alone, here are some creative suggestions on how to turn any of these five classic cocktails into a one-of-a-kind specialty of the house.

• **Mojito** — The Cuban-born Mojito became an international hit during the '30s and '40s. It is now phenomenally popular and likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. There is no reason that you have to serve the same Mojito as the restaurant down the street. Start by experimenting with brown or Demerara sugars instead of granulated. The most significant variable in the drink, however, is the type of rum you use. While most specialty Mojitos still feature light rum, increasingly more mixologists are starting to tap into the rich universe of dark rums.

• **Margarita** — The Margarita continues to be the most requested cocktail in America, possibly because of its enormous versatility. Make sure that you start with a balanced base mix, preferably one made with both lime and lemon juice. Consider using more than one type of tequila in your Margarita. For example, one advisable strategy is mixing an exuberant silver tequila with a mellow añejo. It presents the best of both worlds. There is also tremendous latitude with respect to modifiers.

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There is a wide range of liqueurs that marry beautifully in the Margarita, so experiment and create a masterpiece.

• **Martini** — The King of Cocktails has perhaps never been more popular. The defining moment was when mixologists started to toy with the notion of using liqueurs to change the drink's character. Case in point is the **Appletini**, whose flavor is derived from *DeKuyper's Sour Apple Pucker*. Try marketing a **Chocolate Raspberry Martini** (*Chambord* and *Goldenbarr Chocolate Vodka*) or a **South Seas Martini** (*Midori* and *Van Gogh Pineapple Vodka*). Considering the wealth of liqueurs sitting on your backbar, the creative options are unlimited. Finally, revisit how you garnish your specialty martinis. There are now many types of gourmet olives from which to choose, as well as, a range of peppers and fruit.

• **Cosmopolitan** — No where is it written that this descendant of the Gimlet and Kamikaze has to be made with citrus-infused vodka. Leading

alternatives include citrus-infused rums, fruit-flavored vodkas or any one of the several outstanding limoncellos on the market. Consider turning the drink purple by substituting Blue Curaçao for the *Cointreau* or giving the cocktail a bit more zing by using fresh lime juice instead of the Rose's.

• **Bloody Mary** — More than just a mixed drink, a skillfully prepared Bloody Mary is like a meal with an attitude. Bloody Marys should be substantial and chock full of great tasting nutrients. Its strongest attribute is its adaptability. Add some wasabi and a splash of sake to make a **Fujiana Mary**. A healthy measure of onion powder, red pepper, paprika, thyme and pepper vodka makes a **Cajun Mary**. Add salsa and hot sauce for a **Sonoran Mary**, or chili powder, paprika, cumin and a wedge of beef jerky for a **Laredo Mary**. Other popular ingredients include barbecue sauce, clam juice, garlic, olive juice and prepared horseradish. Finish the drink off with some cooked shrimp or a hand full of Doritos and you have a veritable feast for the senses.

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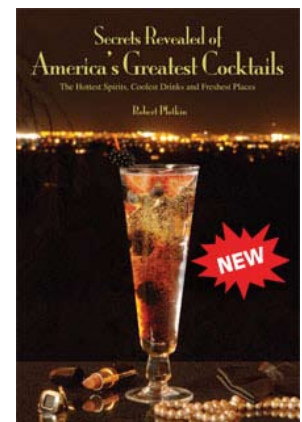
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