



Infused And Enthused

Wintertime Is Liqueurs Time To Shine

As winter grabs hold and your customers are forced to contend with howling Arctic winds and frostbitten extremities, crank up the heat with warm spirited drink specialties featuring the classic liqueurs of the season.

For on-premise gurus and master mixologists, winter is rife with marketing opportunities. There is a wide array of drink types and styles that lend themselves to seasonal promotions, far more than at any other time of the year. One of the key elements of the beverage operator's winter repertoire is promoting liqueurs.

The reason is that liqueurs are formulated to deliver a tremendous amount of flavor and as any casual lounge observer will confirm, flavor is what people are looking for.

Try to imagine operating a busy bar without liqueurs. You wouldn't be busy for long without products such as Kahlúa, Baileys Irish Cream or Disaronno Amaretto. Consider what your business would be like with no Grand Marnier or Frangelico. With few exceptions, liqueurs are the essential flavor components behind most great cocktails and specialty drinks.

While liqueurs may be sipped after dinner in tablecloth restaurants, in nightclubs and bars they're more often than not used in drinkmaking. With few exceptions, liqueurs are the essential flavor components behind most great cocktails and specialty drinks. The Margarita, Kamikaze, Long Island Iced Tea, Black Russian, B-52, and Mai Tai are among a long list of drinks dependent on liqueurs for flavor.

Winterized Liqueurs

The best way to know the players of winter is with a scorecard. To that end, we've highlighted liqueurs that will make anyone's top shelf. Now go enjoy the winter. It happens only once a year.

- AGAVERO — Agavero Liqueur is a made from a blend of select reposado and añejo tequilas. The secret ingredient is a unique tea brewed from the Damiana flower, which is an aromatic flower indigenous to the mountains of Jalisco. Agavero has a singular, thoroughly enjoyable flavor.

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- **Baileys Original Irish Cream** — An instant success upon its 1979 introduction, Baileys is now the best selling liqueur in the world. Made in Dublin, the liqueur is produced from fresh dairy cream infused with aged, triple distilled Irish whiskey and natural vanilla and chocolate flavorings. The liqueur is homogenized, pasteurized and bottled at 34 proof.
- **Chambord** — Long a favorite of King Louis the XIV, Chambord is an elegant and refined crème de framboise. Now twenty years after its debut, Chambord is permanently enrolled in the “must have” class. The liqueur is crafted from grape spirits infused with fresh small black raspberries, herbs and other fruits. The liqueur is then sweetened with honey, filtered and bottled at 33 proof.
- **Disaronno Originale Amaretto** — One of grand dames of liqueurs, Disaronno Amaretto originated in Saronno, Italy in 1525. Its proprietary recipe is still made with premium Italian grape spirits, which are patiently steeped with 17 herbs and fruits, including apricot kernel oil. Once fully infused with flavor, the liqueur is sweetened with caramelized sugar and bottled at 56 proof. Disaronno Originale Amaretto is often imitated, yet never equaled.
- **Drambuie** — First produced in 1906, Drambuie is made in Edinburgh, Scotland from a base of well-aged, Highland single malt whiskies. The blend is then infused with a measured dose of spice, herbs and heather honey. Ultra-premium Drambuie has an intriguing bouquet and elegant palate. The finish is especially long and flavorful.
- **Frangelico Liqueur** — Introduced in the early 1980s, Frangelico immediately shot up the pop charts. Its brilliant hazelnut flavor quickly became the featured attraction in many contemporary classics. The liqueur is made with a base of Italian grape spirits, which are steeped with the natural extracts, including hazelnuts, cocoa, coffee, vanilla, rhubarb and orange blossoms.
- **Grand Marnier** — Ranked among the world's finest liqueurs, Grand Marnier is made in Neauphle-le-Château, France exactly as it was over 120 years ago. Orange peels are first slowly macerated in cognac. The infused-spirit is redistilled, blended with the premiere cognacs from each of the growing regions and sweetened with sugar syrup. The liqueur is then barrel-aged at the Marnier-Lapostolle cognac cellars. To describe Grand Marnier as exquisite may be underselling it a bit. Resist the urge to pamper Grand Marnier, however, it is unsurpassed in cocktails.
- **Irish Mist** — The original recipe for Irish Mist is purported to date back over 1200 years. Produced under the supervision of the Irish government, the liqueur is made with barrel-aged whiskey, heather honey and a medley of spices. The medium body delivers a well-balanced, singularly delicious palate of honey, spices and herbs, with the flavor of the whiskey making its presence known on the long, satiny finish.
- **Jägermeister** — The mere mention of Jägermeister is enough to raise a knowing smile to the face of any seasoned imbibers. The herbal liqueur was first bottled and widely marketed in 1935. Jägermeister is comprised of a sophisticated blend of 56 roots, herbs and spices from around the world. The various botanicals are individually macerated in neutral spirits for up to 6 weeks. They are then filtered and matured in charred oak barrels for a minimum of one year prior to blending. Jägermeister is a singular sensation not to be missed.
- **Kahlúa Especial** — Kahlúa Especial is appropriately named. The superpremium liqueur is made entirely from high grade, Arabica coffee beans from South America. They are handpicked and carefully roasted in small batches. While the irresistible aroma of roasted coffee naturally takes the lead, the notes of caramel, vanilla and milk chocolate are captivating in a supporting role. The overall effect is without equal. In a country that finds tremendous joy in coffee, Kahlúa Especial is a 70 proof phenomenon waiting to happen.

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- **Patrón Xo Café** — Patrón XO Café is no flash in the pan. Imported by the same folks who make Patrón 100% Blue Agave Tequila, XO Café is a luscious, thoroughly satisfying liqueur. It has a captivating aroma, and a full, rich flavor balanced between fresh roasted coffee and aged tequila. It's exceptionally light and dry for a liqueur, and has a memorable finish.

Robert Plotkin is a judge at the San Francisco World Spirits Competition and the author of numerous books including the 5th edition of *The Bartender's Companion: The Original Guide to American Cocktails and Drinks*. To read more from Robert (and other members of BarMedia) visit his blog, BarMedia.com/blog. You can reach him at BarMedia— 1-800-421-7179 or robert@barmedia.com.

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