

Flirty, Tart & Tangy-- The Lemon Drop

A sterling example of cocktail greatness from the 20th century is the **Lemon Drop**. It purportedly originated at a Henry Africa's in San Francisco in the early 1990s. In a time when drinks leaned toward the sweet end of the spectrum, this exceptionally light and refreshingly tart cocktail bucked the trend.

The Lemon Drop is a cocktail made with citrus-infused vodka, simple syrup and fresh lemon juice. The ingredients are shaken vigorously and served in a chilled cocktail glass. The interactive nature of the original garnish likely fueled the Lemon Drop's tremendous popularity. It was a sugarcoated lemon wedge and the ritual was after each sip to take a lick of sugar and suck on the lemon. Slowly that gave way to the drink being presented with a sugared rim.

In its earliest incarnation, the Lemon Drop was little more than a well-presented Vodka Sour. To this day, many reputable drink guides still list the drink's ingredients as citrus-infused vodka, lemon juice and simple syrup. But the cocktail's big break came when mixologists began using Cointreau as the sweetener, instead of simple syrup. The addition catapulted the cocktail into a more elite status. The classic liqueur imbued the drink with better balance, more body and contributed considerably to its depth of character.

The Lemon Drop's appeal is nearly as universal as that of lemonade. There's something especially tantalizing about a cocktail that can deftly deliver so much lip-smacking, mouth-puckering flavor and do it with class. It's a cocktail with great creative potential as well.

For more than a decade, however, the nation's mixologists have refused to leave well enough alone. As it turns out, the cocktail adapts beautifully to a wide array of flavored vodkas. An excellent example is the **Pineapple Drop**, a signature at Seattle's ultra-swank Ibiza Dinner Club. The cocktail is made with Van Gogh Pineapple Vodka, Cointreau and lemon juice. At the Mosaic Restaurant in Scottsdale, the drink to be seen with is **Mia's Drop**, an expertly conceived concoction featuring Charbay Meyer Lemon Vodka, Charbay Red Raspberry Vodka, lemon juice and muddled raspberries.

The Lemon Drop is also marvelous when prepared with light rum, flavored rum and blanco tequila. An illustration of its flexibility is the **Lemon Balm Drop**, a specialty cocktail of the Jade Bar at luxurious Sanctuary on Camelback Mountain. The drink is made with Bombay Sapphire Gin, lemon balm leaves (an herb related to mint with a lemon fragrance), triple sec and fresh lemon sour mix. *Bon appetit!*

Herbert Hoover Lemon Drop

Specialty of The Mission Inn Hotel & Spa

Created by Alan Lee

Sugar rimmed cocktail glass, chilled

Pour ingredients into an iced mixing glass

1 1/4 oz. Absolut Citron Vodka

3/4 oz. Grand Marnier

1/2 oz. lemon-lime soda

2 oz. lemonade

Shake and strain

Garnish with a lemon wedge

Pour ingredients into the iced mixing glass. Shake thoroughly and strain contents into a sugar rimmed, chilled cocktail glass. Garnish with a lemon wedge.

Lemon Balm Drop

Specialty of Jade Bar

Created by Daniella Gonzalez

Sugar rimmed cocktail glass, chilled

Pour ingredients into an iced mixing glass

5 Lemon Balm leaves

2 oz. Bombay Sapphire Gin

1/2 oz. Triple Sec

1/2 oz. fresh lemon sour mix

Shake and strain

Garnish with a lemon wheel

Pour ingredients into the iced mixing glass. Shake thoroughly and strain contents into a sugar rimmed, chilled cocktail glass. Garnish with a lemon wheel.

Classic Lemon Drop

Excerpted from The Bartender's Companion to Great American Cocktails

Sugar rimmed cocktail glass, chilled

Pour ingredients into an iced mixing glass

1 1/2 oz. Absolut Citron Vodka

1/2 oz. Cointreau

1/2 oz. fresh lemon juice

Shake and strain

Garnish with a lemon wheel

Pour ingredients into the iced mixing glass. Shake thoroughly and strain contents into a sugar rimmed, chilled cocktail glass. Garnish with a lemon wheel.

Pineapple Drop

Specialty of Ibiza Dinner Club

Created by Ibiza's staff

Sugar rimmed cocktail glass, chilled

Pour ingredients into an iced mixing glass

1 oz. Van Gogh Pineapple Vodka

1/2 oz. Cointreau

1/2 oz. fresh lemon juice

Shake and strain

Pour ingredients into the iced mixing glass. Shake thoroughly and strain contents into a sugar rimmed, chilled cocktail glass.

Prickly Pear Drop

Specialty of Mosaic Restaurant

Created by Stephanie Kozicki

Pink color sugar rimmed cocktail glass, chilled

Pour ingredients into an iced mixing glass

2 oz. Stoli Strasberi Vodka

1 oz. Cointreau

3 tsp. prickly pear puree

Shake and strain

Garnish with a lemon twist

Pour ingredients into the iced mixing glass.

Shake thoroughly and strain contents into a pink color sugar rimmed, chilled cocktail glass. Garnish with a lemon twist.

Lemon Heaven

Excerpted from The Bartender's Companion to Great American Cocktails

Cocktail glass, chilled

Pour ingredients into iced mixing glass

1 3/4 oz. Citrus Vodka

1 oz. Limoncello Liqueur

3/4 oz. Cruzan Orange Rum

1 oz. half & half cream

Shake and strain

Garnish with a lemon wheel

Pour ingredients into the iced mixing glass. Shake thoroughly and strain contents into a chilled cocktail glass. Garnish with a lemon wheel.

Lemon Heights

Excerpted from The Bartender's Companion to Great American Cocktails

Rocks glass, ice

Build in glass

1 1/2 oz. Citrus Vodka

1/2 oz. Limoncello Liqueur

1/2 oz. Hpnotiq Liqueur

Garnish with a lemon twist

Pour ingredients into the iced rocks glass in the order listed. Garnish with a lemon twist.

Lemon Lavender

Excerpted from The Bartender's Companion to Great American Cocktails

Cocktail glass, chilled

Pour ingredients into iced mixing glass

1 3/4 oz. Original Cristall Lemon Vodka

3/4 oz. Blue Curaçao

1/2 oz. fresh lime juice

1/2 oz. white cranberry juice

Stir and strain

Pour ingredients into the iced mixing glass. Stir gently and strain contents into a chilled cocktail glass.

For more sensational recipes check out BarMedia's *Secrets Revealed of America's Greatest Cocktails*, *The Original Guide to American Cocktails and Drinks - 5th Edition*, *The Original Guide to Caribbean Rum and Drinks*, *The Original Guide to Margaritas and Tequila*, and *The Original Guide to Alcohol-Free Beverages and Drinks!*
