

Raising the Bar

**Stocking the Staples
at Home without
Breaking the Bank**

COCKTAIL CLASSIC

Cosmopolitan

Courtesy liquor.com

1½ ounces SVEDKA Citron Vodka

1 ounce Cointreau

½ ounce fresh lime juice

1 dash cranberry juice

Lime peel for garnish

Maraschino cherry
for garnish (optional)

Add all the ingredients to a shaker and fill with ice. Shake, and strain into a chilled cocktail glass.

Garnish with a lime peel and cherry if desired.

Written by Bill Burke

Entertaining at home can make for an enjoyable evening. Entertaining at your own home bar can create memories, provide a more intimate setting and make your personal tavern the neighborhood hot spot.

A well-stocked home bar can start from humble beginnings. A few bottles of liquor, a mixer or two, and you're on your way. It is possible to create a top-notch bar on a low-end budget.

Sure, it'd be nice to be able to whip up a Commonwealth — which calls for 71 different ingredients — but that's likely a bit excessive. Leave the digital smoke infusers, fat washes and strained egg whites to the black belt mixologists who are paid to impress and serve. Instead, begin with the basics, which can be used to make the widest array of cocktails. And perhaps most importantly, stock it with what you like to drink — because at some point those guests will go home, and you'll be able to settle-in with a nightcap. It might as well be something you love.

Here's what you'll need to make many of the simplest, most popular cocktails.

BOURBON

Get this: Bourbon is great for sipping, but it's also very useful in many cocktails. Jim Beam Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey (the white label) and Buffalo Trace Bourbon are both great choices that are also friendly on your wallet.

Make this: Trends come and go, but there are a few cocktails that stand the test of time. The Old Fashioned is one, and it's relatively easy to make.



Old Fashioned

- 1½ ounces bourbon whiskey
- 2 dashes Angostura bitters
- 1 sugar cube
- Few dashes of plain water
- Maraschino cherry for garnish

Place the sugar cube in an old fashioned glass and saturate with bitters and then add a dash of plain water. Muddle until dissolved. Fill the glass with ice cubes and add whiskey. Garnish with a cherry.

Keep it in the 802: Rye can also be used in an Old Fashioned, and the conversation often begins and ends at a 150-year-old renovated dairy barn in Shoreham where WhistlePig Rye is produced. whistlepigwhiskey.com

SCOTCH

Get this: Adherents will advise sipping your Scotch with a little water, neat or with some ice. But there are some interesting cocktails that work great with the peaty, smoky and malty flavors of Scotch. Scotch can get expensive quickly, and you might want to sip the more pricey Scotch neat, but if you're going to mix, add a bottle Dewar's or Glenfiddich to your stock.

Make this: First created in 1894 by a bartender at the Waldorf Astoria, the Rob Roy was named in honor of the premiere of an operetta by the same name — which is loosely based on the Scottish folk hero, Rob Roy MacGregor.

Rob Roy

Courtesy liquor.com

- 2 ounces Scotch whiskey
- ¾ ounces sweet vermouth
- 3 dashes Angostura bitters
- Cherry for garnish

Add all the ingredients to a mixing glass and fill with ice. Stir and strain into a chilled cocktail glass. Garnish with a cherry.

Keep it in the 802: Here's the short story: Scotch whisky is made in Scotland. Period. Still, Stonecutter Spirits in Middlebury produces Heritage Cask Whiskey, which is distilled like bourbon, aged like an Irish whiskey and finished like a Scotch. stonecutterspirits.com

TEQUILA

Get this: The three main types of tequila — Blanco, Anejo and Reposado — all work well in cocktails, but will impart different characteristics. For this recipe, try Herradura Reposado, a gold tequila aged in wood for at least two months.

Make this: The Tequila Sunrise is simple, using only three ingredients, and is perfect for these warmer months. It's served unmixed to preserve the layered appearance.



Tequila Sunrise

- 1½ ounces Reposado tequila, chilled
- 4 ounces fresh orange juice
- 1 dash grenadine
- Orange slice for garnish
- Cherry for garnish

Add the tequila and then the orange juice to a chilled highball glass. Float the grenadine on top and garnish with an orange slice and a cherry.

RUM

Get this: Many of the best-known, most popular cocktails are rum-based drinks. And while there are different styles and grades of rum (white, gold, dark and spiced, among others), the classic Bacardi Superior or Mount Gay Silver Rum will sit nicely in a mixer.

Make this: Call it a rum and Coke, or add an exotic touch and call it a Cuba Libre. Either way, it's one of the most popular and easiest cocktails to make.

Cuba Libre

- 1 ounce white rum
- 3 ounces cola
- Lime wedge for garnish

Add all the ingredients to a highball glass filled with ice and garnish with the lime.



Keep it in the 802: Mad River Distillers, in Warren, produces Mad River Maple Cask Rum. It's finished in spirits barrels that hold maple syrup, resulting in a rich and complex flavor with hints of smoky whiskey. madrivedistillers.com



Where Do I Put This?

It'll pay off if your home bar is organized and clean. Here's a look at everything in its proper place.

Most **liquors** like whiskey, gin, vodka and rum can be stored safely at room temperature. The alcohol content is strong enough to preserve them, and they will keep for some time.

Cream **liqueurs**, egg liqueurs and vermouth should be refrigerated.

Mixers like cola, club soda, cranberry juice, tomato juice, ginger ale and orange juice should also be refrigerated. There is no need to refrigerate Angostura bitters, and while Triple Sec will be fine sitting behind the bar with the rest of your liquor, some experts say it will hold its flavor better when stored in the refrigerator with the cap tightly on.



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VODKA

Get this: Vodka is the Swiss Army knife of spirits. It can fit into countless cocktails and most good vodkas will not alter the taste of your creation with overpowering flavors. Absolut is always a good choice, with its tried-and-true standing, as is Grey Goose, which has a smoky aroma with hints of mint and grain. Ketel One has a mildly spicy and slightly sweet flavor. Tito's Handmade, made with corn, has a slightly different profile, and is also a strong choice.

Make this: Combining vodka, watermelon and fresh lemonade is like sunshine in a glass. Celebrate the season with this easy recipe.

ON THE COVER

Red, White & Blueberry Lemonade

- 4 ounces lemonade
- 1½ ounces vodka
- ½ cup watermelon cubes or balls
- ¼ cup fresh blueberries
- Sparkling water or seltzer

Add first four ingredients to a tall glass or mason jar, half-filled with ice. Top with sparkling water.

Keep it in the 802: Smugglers' Notch Vodka, made with water from the Mount Mansfield watershed in northern Vermont, is hand bottled at the distillery in Jeffersonville. smugglersnotchdistillery.com

GIN

Get this: From the Tom Collins to the Rickey to the Martini, gin is essential for making a wide range of drinks. Tanqueray is a delicate gin with a citrusy nose, and Hendrick's is less juniper with the added refreshing taste of cucumber.

Make this: Nothing quite says summer like a Gin and Tonic.

Gin and Tonic

- 2 ounces gin
- 4 ounces tonic water
- 1 tablespoon lime juice
- Lime wedge for garnish

Place ice cubes in a tall, narrow glass and pour the gin, tonic water and lime juice over the ice. Stir well with a long-necked spoon and garnish with a lime wedge.

Keep it in the 802: Ask most Vermont State Agency store owners which locally-produced gin sells best and the answer is virtually unanimous: Barr Hill Gin — Caledonia Spirits' "ode to the hardworking bees of the Northeast." The juniper-forward botanicals are balanced perfectly by the floral depth of raw honey.