

Better Than Pumpkin Pie

Seasonal Cocktails Add Character, Flavor to Holiday Meals

The rich, savory flavors and familiar aromas that assail our senses in late November every year are as welcome as the warmth and fellowship of the holiday season.

But every gathering could use a sip of something spirited.

With a little imagination, some creative suggestions and a modestly stocked home bar, hosts can surprise and impress every guest. Whether it's crafted to pair perfectly with the holiday meal, to cap off a sweet dessert or to distract from an overbearing relative's lectures, there are a wide variety of tipples you can whip up to go with your turkey.

Choose one or two of the following and remember that when the dishes have been washed, the leftovers put into the refrigerator and the football games have been decided, someone has to drive home.

ON OUR COVER

Apple Pie Spiced Cider

courtesy marthastewart.com

- 1¼ quarts apple cider
- 3 tablespoons firmly packed light brown sugar
- 7 whole cinnamon sticks, (6 sticks for garnish)
- 1 teaspoon ground allspice
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger
- Ground cloves
- Freshly grated nutmeg
- Salt
- ½ cup brandy

In a medium saucepan, whisk together cider, sugar, spices and salt. Bring to a simmer over medium-low heat. Removed from heat; pour in brandy, if desired. Strain into a pitcher and discard solids. Serve in mugs garnished with cinnamon sticks.



Pumpkin Martini

courtesy ahealthylifeforme.com

- 1 tablespoon pumpkin puree
- 1 tablespoon almond-coconut milk
- ½ ounce Cointreau
- 1½ ounces tequila
- Ice
- Cinnamon stick
- Sprinkle cinnamon
- Sprinkle red pepper

Put pumpkin puree, milk, Cointreau, tequila and ice in a martini shaker and shake to cool and blend. Pour into a martini glass and add the cinnamon stick. Sprinkle cinnamon and red pepper over the top.

The Thanksgiving Cocktail

courtesy thespruce.com

- ¾ ounces gin
- ¾ ounces vermouth (dry)
- ¾ ounces apricot brandy
- ¼ ounce lemon juice
- Maraschino cherry for garnish

Pour the ingredients into a cocktail shaker with ice and shake well. Strain into a chilled old-fashioned or cocktail glass and garnish with the cherry.

Cranberry Sauce Margarita

courtesy delish.com

- 2 ounces tequila
- 1½ tablespoons chunky cranberry sauce
- 1 teaspoon honey
- Brown sugar
- 1 cup ice
- 1 lime
- Cranberries (fresh or frozen)

Rim a margarita glass with brown sugar. Fill a cocktail shaker with ice, tequila, the juice of one lime, chunky cranberry sauce and honey. Shake and then strain the mixture into a glass.