

The 411 on 2-1-1

The Secret to Creating Great Cocktails at Home

A skilled bartender is equal parts entertainer, host, scientist, artist and therapist, among perhaps a dozen more additional job requirements. There are countless recipes to memorize (never mind execute), ingredients to stock, infusions to craft and customers to satisfy. So, if the thought of attempting to fill the shoes of your favorite mixologist at home seems a little daunting, it's easy to see why.

However, there is a shortcut to getting you on your way. It's all about the **2-1-1**.

2-1-1, the golden ratio, is a formula used to create a huge number of cocktails and can be used by beginners to craft a wide range of perfect tasting drinks. Translated from the native mixologist tongue, 2-1-1 is two ounces, one ounce, one ounce — a way of measuring the ingredients in a given cocktail.

While there are a myriad of cocktail types and subcategories, many of the classics fall into either a spirits-forward (martini, negroni, old fashioned, etc.) or sour category. The sours (simple or complex) which can be anything from a whiskey sour to a daiquiri. Most sours can be recreated by using this ratio. And many cocktails combine three main ingredients: **2 ounces** of the alcohol, **1 ounce** of a sour ingredient and **1 ounce** of a sweet ingredient.

BY BILL BURKE

Here's how to use the ratio to serve your guests. First, stock your home bar with the essential and most flexible liquors and a few items from your refrigerator. The most versatile and useful include vodka, a light rum (for daiquiris and mojitos), a dark rum (for tropical and tiki cocktails, in particular), gin, whiskey and tequila (margaritas).

Then, get ready to measure. The easiest way to make sure your measurements are accurate is to get the best tool for the job: a jigger. A jigger is a two-sided metal cup used to measure spirits where one side holds double the amount of the other side. You'll typically find that most are the two ounce/one ounce variety, though there are others. However, the proportions will remain the same.

It all works because the alcohol serves as the base for your drink, and the sweet and sour support it by complementing the flavor, not hiding it.

Think of the 2-1-1 approach as a building block. It's the technical component to crafting respectable drinks. From there, the artist in you will need to emerge. Of course, certain ingredients work well together, while others may send your guests running for the ready-made shelf. The more experience you develop, the more skilled you'll become and the better your reputation will be around the neighborhood. A little experimentation is good, especially if you're basing your foundation on the 2-1-1 ratio.

Once you're stocked and you've got the necessary tools and glasses, it's time to put 2-1-1 to the test.

When it comes to putting it all together and lending a sympathetic ear to someone down on their luck at the bar — well, that's up to you.

Try your hand at these classic 2-1-1 cocktails.



ON OUR COVER

▲ The Classic Mojito

- 2 ounces rum
- 1 ounce lime juice
- 1 ounce simple syrup
- Club soda
- Mint leaves
- 2 teaspoons sugar

Muddle six mint leaves and the sugar and lime juice. Add the rum, top with soda water, garnish with a sprig of mint and serve in a Collins glass over ice.



▲ Whiskey Sour

- 2 ounces bourbon
- 1 ounce fresh lemon juice
- 1 ounce simple syrup
- ½ orange wheel or wedge
- Maraschino cherry

Combine bourbon, lemon juice and simple syrup in a cocktail shaker. Fill shaker with ice, cover and shake vigorously until outside of the shaker is very cold (about 20 seconds). Strain cocktail through strainer or slotted spoon into an old-fashioned or rocks glass filled with ice. Garnish with the orange and cherry.

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What's in Your Toolbox?

Once your home bar is stocked with a small variety of spirits, maybe a few simple syrups and sweet liqueurs — an orange liqueur like triple sec, Irish cream or amaretto — you'll want to have the correct tools. Here are some of the most common and most useful to help you exercise your drink-making skills.

Shaker: Cocktails are shaken to integrate all the ingredients. It's thorough, and a common step in creating many drinks. A cobbler strainer comes in three pieces — the main container, a lid with a strainer in it and a cap to cover the strainer while shaking.

A Boston shaker (you'll see many pros using these) consists of a metal tin and a glass cup. The glass forms a seal with the tin, usually holds a larger volume of liquid and is quicker to use behind a busy bar.

Mixing Glass: A glass beaker in which the drink is stirred. According to experts, any cocktail that only uses alcoholic ingredients, such as the martini, Manhattan or Boulevardier, should be stirred. A popular type of mixing glass is the Yaraí glass, whose exterior is etched in a weave pattern.

Bar Spoon: A long handled spoon used for mixing and laying drinks. It holds roughly the same amount as a teaspoon, and its length ensures it can reach the bottom of your mixing glass.

Strainer: A metal sieve used to remove ice from a mixed drink as it's poured. It's placed over the mouth of the glass or shaker, and small holes allow only the liquid to pass through.



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ASK YOUR BARTENDER ABOUT MOCKTAILS.

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▲ Kamikaze

- 2 ounces vodka
- 1 ounce orange liqueur, such as triple sec
- 1 ounce lime juice

Add all the ingredients into a shaker with ice and shake thoroughly until well-chilled. Pour into two shot glasses.



▲ Aviation

- 2 ounces gin
- 1 ounce maraschino liqueur
- 1 ounce crème de violette or crème yvette
- ¾ ounce fresh lemon juice
- Brandied cherry for garnish

Add all ingredients into a shaker with ice and shake. Strain into a cocktail glass. Garnish with a brandied cherry and serve.

▼ Gimlet

- 2 ounces gin
- 1 ounce lime juice
- 1 ounce simple syrup
- Lime wheel for garnish

Add all ingredients into a shaker with ice and shake. Strain into a chilled cocktail glass or an old-fashioned glass filled with ice. Garnish with lime wheel.



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