

# Cocktail Mixing

Or

Basic knowledge: Making you look smarter and  
classier than the other guys at the bar

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Average Joe Beerdrinker knows very little about mixing drinks except for, maybe, the contents of a “Rum and Coke” and that a “Blowjob” is also a drink. This article’s goal is to help educate, even to the slightest degree, the average drinker. Knowing that a lime should go in a Corona is common knowledge, but not many people know how to mix a dry martini. After this article the reader should be able to “shop talk” with a bartender and not look like an idiot at a cocktail party.

## 1) Overview

This set of instructions is written for anyone from curious cocktail drinkers to experienced bartenders looking for a tip. The following article will cover basic cocktail mixing and is spiced up with some interesting facts. Due to the limitations of the article, the cocktails presented in this instruction set are confined to the Manhattan and the Martini, along with some variations. Although this article only covers two drinks, the processes and terms are universal and can be applied to other drinks as well.

### 1.1) The Shot

All drink recipes are based on the principle of a “shot.” A shot is approximately equal in alcohol content to a serving of beer or a typical serving of wine. For example, there are two shots of gin in a Martini. Contrary to popular belief, there is no defined size of a shot. The owner of a bar dictates the size of a shot. Sizes can range from around 1 ounce to 1-1/2 ounces. This article assumes **1-1/4 ounces** for all shots, a typical size.

## 1.2) Pouring technique

There are different ways to measure out a shot: an experienced bartender can eyeball the amount, or a shot can be measured using a *jigger* (a measuring cup used in bartending). The quickest and most common measuring technique is the count method. This utilizes a pourer stuck into the mouth of a bottle to restrict flow to a certain rate, which makes the process uniform for all bottles. To pour a 1-1/4 ounce shot, raise the bottle with a pourer in it for **four seconds**, this is approximately one shot. This method takes practice, but not very much experience.

To make sure the bartender is making a good drink, count the seconds that go into the pour. Four seconds or more per is fine. Also, the customer should always be able to see what is going into his or her drink. If a bartender mixes a drink behind the bar, the patron cannot see what is going on, which is bad practice. If that happens, tell the bartender to make it again, at chest level.

## 1.3) Serving Methods

All the cocktails discussed can be served in different ways. One of these ways is “neat,” or synonymously “up,” meaning without any ice in the glass. An alternate way to serve these is “on the rocks” meaning with ice in the glass. Both of these methods will be covered later. Patrons should always be asked which way they would like their cocktail. This is usually the first thing that a bartender asks after a cocktail is ordered. Additionally, it is a show of class if the patron is asked what type of liquor they would like in their drink, the customer will respect the fact that their input is desired. It is not necessary to ask, but it is polite to be given a choice.

## 2) List of Bar Essentials

**Boston Shaker Set** – Consists of a large metal cup (female shaker tin) which fits around the lip of a smaller glass (male shaker glass). The set includes a strainer to fit over the mouth of the glass (see picture A). A similar alternate to the Boston shaker set is a cocktail shaker set. For the purposes of this article, we will just consider the Boston shaker set.

**Jigger** – A two sided measuring cup available in various sizes. For the purposes of this article a 1-1/4 by 3/4 ounce jigger will be assumed.

**Mixing spoon** - Used to stir the ingredients of the drink and to measure certain ingredients.

**Cocktail glass** – Despite common vocabulary misuse, this is NOT a martini glass, there is no such thing as a martini glass. Used to serve cocktails. It's typically 4-6 ounces. (See picture B)

**Rocks glass** – Used to serve drinks “on the rocks,” it’s usually 5-7 ounces. (See picture C)

**Liquor** – Booze

**Garnishes** – Olives, limes, mayonnaise, etc.

**Bar pourers** – Put in the end of a bottle to measure out liquor easier. (See Picture D)

**Ice** – Frozen water, often served in cube form.



A. Shaker set



B. Cocktail Glass



C. Rocks Glass



D. Bar Pourer

### 3) The Martini

Thanks in part to 007; the Martini is the most popular cocktail in America and possibly the world. It is a superb cocktail and is a popular before dinner drink. It is a mix of Gin (or Vodka for a Vodka martini) and dry vermouth. The accepted American recipe is approximately one part vermouth to eight parts Gin or Vodka. Although these proportions are not completely uniform, there are many variations. For example: a Martini can be made “dry” by using less vermouth than normal. Please note, real Martini drinkers are sticklers about their drinks. It is not uncommon to hear a sentence-long order for a Martini, i.e. dry in and out Skyy Vodka Martini, up, with a twist. To understand this order, read on.

#### 3.1) A Brief History of the Drink

The origin of the Martini is not always agreed upon. But all agree that the drink originated around the time of the Civil war and that the original recipe is very distant from what is common today. One perspective of its origination is that the drink was invented in San Francisco’s Occidental Hotel. It is believed that bartender Jerry Thomas dubbed the drink the “Martinez” around 1860. The original recipe has evolved greatly but started off as follows:

##### “Martinez”

One jigger of gin  
One wine glass of sweet red vermouth  
One dash of bitters  
Two dashes of maraschino liqueur  
Shake well  
Garnish with a lemon slice.

This recipe makes an aromatic, cherry flavored cocktail. Although this is not a very well known drink, it is very good. Although most bartenders will not know this recipe, it is included for curiosity’s sake. Order it to outwit an arrogant bartender.

#### 3.2) Directions

Martini drinkers tend to be very specific as to how they like their drinks and many bar manuals fall short when it comes to Martinis. Don’t trust every bar book, especially any from Europe, recipes are different overseas. Special care was taken to find the proper mix for the following. This recipe is a consensus of various discriminating individuals. This method is one of many, but is considered a popular and proper way to make the Martini. Remembering this recipe will also make you seem classy.

##### “The Martini” (stirred)

1. *Fill the Boston Shaker glass to the top with ice.* Take care to keep the ice as dry as possible. If the ice has extra water in it, strain it out using the mixing spoon. Too much water on the ice will dilute the drink.
2. *Add 2-1/2 to 3 ounces of Gin into the glass.* The brand of Gin is always up to the patron. Liquor is always poured over the ice to chill the drink.
3. *Add 2-3 dashes of dry vermouth.* Vermouth is the main difference between a Martini and just straight Gin. It makes the drink. However, too much vermouth will spoil the drink. Other bar manuals tend to overlook this fact.
4. *Stir the drink using the mixing spoon.* Hold the utensil by the part that would normally go into your mouth if this were a real spoon. The slender part of the spoon is used to stir the drink, not the wide end.
5. *Strain the drink into a chilled cocktail glass.* Use the strainer. No ice should go into the cocktail glass.
6. *Garnish the Martini with an olive or a twist of lemon.* The customer should decide the garnish.

The previous stirred method is how a Martini is typically made unless specified as shaken (a la James Bond). The difference between the two methods is minimal; mainly, the shaken Martini will have small ice chunks in it and will appear cloudier than a stirred Martini. Debates over the difference between shaken and stirred martinis always arise. There is no answer, just like the Euthanasia dispute and the chicken or the egg controversy.

#### “The Martini” (shaken)

The method is identical to the stirred Martini except for step four.

4. *Shake the drink.* To do this, put the female shaker tin over the male shaker glass. Use two hands and place a finger over each end of the glasses and shake next to your ear.

Finish the directions as specified above.

The final major method of making a Martini is to serve it “on the rocks”, or on ice.

#### “The Martini” (On the Rocks)

1. *Fill a rocks glass to the top with ice.* For this drink, the shaker is not used.
2. *Add 2-1/2 – 3 ounces of Gin.* Again, the brand should be specified by the patron.
3. *Add 2-3 dashes of dry vermouth.*
4. *Stir with the mixing spoon.*
5. *Garnish with an olive or lemon twist.*

The Martini on the rocks is the easiest Martini to make since it doesn't utilize the shaker set. Because of this fact, this may be the default method for a bartender to make a Martini. So if a customer were to say “I would like a Martini” without specifying how it would be prepared, he would most likely receive a Martini on the rocks with an olive. It is very important for the patron to be specific about his drink - especially when it comes to Martinis.

### **3.3) Variations on the Martini**

The following are a few of the many different variations on the Martini. They are all made as specified above with some minor changes.

“In and Out Martini” – Instead of adding the vermouth to the shaker glass, add 2-3 dashes of dry vermouth to the cocktail glass, swirl it around, and then throw out the vermouth. This will make the cocktail much more “dry” since there is less vermouth.

“Martini, Wave Vermouth”- Similar to the “In and out Martini”. Do not add vermouth to the shaker glass. Shake out a dash of vermouth and try to catch it in the cocktail glass. If the customer specifies this, he doesn't care whether or not there is any dry vermouth in his drink. It depends on whether the bartender catches it in the glass or not. This drink is done more for comical reasons than anything.

“Gibson Martini”- A Martini garnished with a cocktail onion as opposed to a lemon twist or olive.

“Vodka Martini” – A popular variation of the basic Martini. Use Vodka as opposed to Gin.

“Silver Bullet” – Not to be confused with the beer. This drink is a regular Martini with a drop of scotch added as a garnish. On a side note, Coors beer was not allowed east of the Mississippi river until 1976. This useless knowledge may give the illusion of erudition (education).

## 4) The Manhattan

The Manhattan is quite possibly the second most popular cocktail in America, following the Martini of course. It is made and served very similarly to the Martini. The Manhattan can be made up or on the rocks, stirred or shaken, just like the Martini. It is served in the same glass. Where a Martini contains gin and dry vermouth garnished typically with an olive, the Manhattan is a whiskey and sweet vermouth garnished with a cherry.

### 4.1) A Brief History of the Drink

The Manhattan was first made in the former Manhattan club, a six story building built on Madison Avenue in 1859. It was the residence of Lady Jennie Jerome Churchill, who persuaded a reluctant bartender to mix bourbon with sweet red vermouth and aromatic bitters to please the newly elected Governor Samuel Tilden. The Governor was so pleased with the characteristic of the cocktail that he dubbed the drink "Manhattan" after the club. It is still one of the world's most famous cocktails.

### 4.2) Directions

#### "The Manhattan" (stirred)

1. *Fill the Boston Shaker glass to the top with ice.* Take care to keep the ice as dry as possible. If the ice has extra water in it, strain it out using the mixing spoon. Too much water on the ice will dilute the drink.
2. *Add 2-1/2 ounces of bourbon whiskey or blended whiskey into the glass.* The brand of whiskey is always up to the patron. Liquor is always poured over the ice to chill the drink.
3. *Add 1/2 to 3/4 ounce of sweet vermouth.* Similar to the Martini, too much vermouth will spoil the drink. Note that this is more vermouth than is added to a martini.
4. *Stir the drink using the mixing spoon.* Hold the utensil by the part that would normally go into your mouth if this were a real spoon. The slender part of the spoon is used to stir the drink, not the wide end.
5. *Strain the drink into a chilled cocktail glass.* Use the strainer, no ice should go into the cocktail glass.
6. *Garnish the Manhattan with a cherry.*

The shaken Manhattan and Manhattan on the rocks are made using the same technique as shown earlier. Note that it is up to the patron to decide the type of whiskey, either blended or bourbon. There is a difference between the two liquors. Another type of whiskey is Scotch whiskey, if this is used for the cocktail, the drink goes by another name, the Rob Roy.

#### "Rob Roy" (stirred)

1. *Fill the Boston Shaker glass to the top with ice.* Take care as to keep the ice as dry as possible. If the ice has extra water in it, strain it out using the mixing spoon. Too much water on the ice will dilute the drink.
2. *Add 2-1/2 ounces Scotch whiskey into the glass.* The brand of Scotch is always up to the patron. Liquor is always poured over the ice to chill the drink.
3. *Add 1/2 to 3/4 ounce of sweet vermouth.* Similar to the Martini, too much vermouth will spoil the drink. Note that this is more vermouth than is added to a martini.
4. *Stir the drink using the mixing spoon.* Hold the utensil by the part that would normally go into your mouth if this were a real spoon. The slender part of the spoon is used to stir the drink, not the wide end.
5. *Strain the drink into a chilled cocktail glass.* Use the strainer, no ice should go into the cocktail glass.
6. *Garnish the Rob Roy with a cherry.*

### 4.3) Variations on the Manhattan

“The Dry Manhattan” – A dry Manhattan is very similar to what was previously specified, but instead of adding  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  ounce of **sweet** vermouth, add 2-3 dashes of **dry** vermouth. It is garnished with a twist of lemon, not a cherry.

“The Perfect Manhattan” – When a drink is served “perfect,” this usually means that both sweet and dry vermouth are used (trivia). To make a perfect Manhattan, instead of adding  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  ounce of vermouth in step three, add  $\frac{1}{2}$  ounce of sweet vermouth and 2 dashes of dry vermouth.

The variations on the Manhattan are identical to those of the Rob Roy, except for the fact that Scotch is used.

## 5) Glossary

*Gin* – A neutral spirit flavored in processing with juniper berries and other aromatics. Bad Gin tastes like pine trees.

*Vodka* – An alcoholic beverage distilled from fermented mash of grain. Typically associated with Russia, Western European countries, and Boris Yeltsin.

*Vermouth* – A sour wine coming in many forms. Dry and sweet vermouths are typically used, usually mixed in small quantities. Alone, Vermouth tastes horrible.

*Whiskey* – An alcoholic beverage distilled from grain mash and aged in oak barrels. There are many types of whiskey including bourbon whiskey, blended whiskey, and Scotch whiskey. Whiskey is a category of liquors, not a single type.

*Cocktail* - Defined as any combination of two or more liquors typically served before dinner. Cocktails tend to be stronger than other drinks and are served in smaller portions than wine or beer.

## Sources Consulted

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