

## Chapter 2

# Methods to the Madness

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### *In This Chapter*

- ▶ Mixing up drinks with style
  - ▶ Prepping some great garnishes
  - ▶ Popping the champagne
  - ▶ Conjuring up some bar syrup
- .....

**M**aking good cocktails takes more effort than just pouring ingredients into a glass. This chapter shows you how to pull off some of the little touches that make both you and your drinks look better, with the ultimate result of happier guests.

## *Shaking a Drink*

The main reasons for shaking drinks are to chill a cocktail, to mix ingredients, or to put a *head* or froth on some cocktails.



As a general rule, you should shake all cloudy drinks (including cream drinks and sours), and you should stir all clear drinks. Never shake a cocktail that has carbonated water or soda. For some drinks, such as the Stinger or Martini, ask your guests whether they prefer them shaken or stirred.

To shake a cocktail in a Boston shaker (described in Chapter 1), follow these steps:

- 1. Put some ice cubes (if called for in the recipe) in the glass container.**
- 2. Add the cocktail ingredients.**

3. Place the metal container over the glass container.
4. Hold the metal and glass containers together with both hands and shake with an up-and-down motion.



Make sure you always point the shaker away from your guests. That way you avoid spilling anything on them if the shaker isn't properly sealed.



The two pieces of the shaker may stick together after you shake a drink. Never bang the shaker against the bar or any other surface or object; instead, gently tap it three or four times at the point where the glass and metal containers come in contact.



When pouring or straining the cocktail, always pour from the glass container.

## Cutting Fruit (And One Veg)

Many drinks require fruit garnishes. Your guests expect the garnish, so you can't forgo it, and you have to do it well. Presentation counts, big time. You may mix the best drinks on the planet, but if they don't look good when you serve them, no one's going to want to drink them.

The next few sections show you how to cut the most common garnishes.

### *Lemon twists*

Figure 2-1 illustrates the procedure for cutting lemon twists.

1. Cut off both ends of the lemon.
2. Insert a sharp knife or spoon between the rind and meat of the lemon and carefully separate them.
3. Cut the rind into strips.



The outside of the lemon is where the flavor lies. When adding a lemon twist to a drink, slowly rim the edge of the glass with the outside of the lemon twist and then drop the twist into the cocktail.

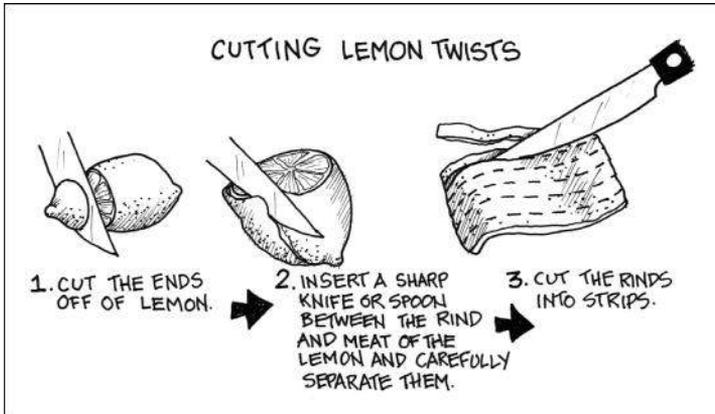


Illustration by Elizabeth Kurtzman

**Figure 2-1:** Cutting lemon twists.

## Orange slices

The following steps for cutting orange slices are shown in Figure 2-2.

1. With the ends of the orange removed, cut the orange in half.
2. Cut each half in half again (lengthwise).
3. Cut the orange quarters into wedges.

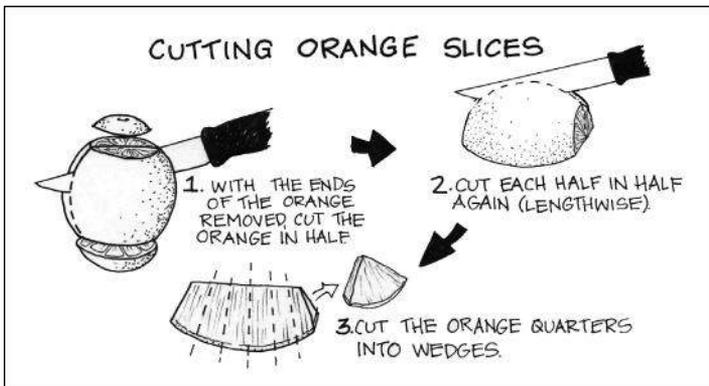


Illustration by Elizabeth Kurtzman

**Figure 2-2:** Cutting orange slices.

## Flaming an orange peel

Flaming the oil of an orange peel enhances the orange flavor in a cocktail, especially one made with Lillet, an orange-based aperitif. After I introduced this technique to bartenders in New York City, they ran with the idea and added it to various liquors such as bourbon, vodka, gin, rum, and so on.

Follow these steps to flame an orange peel or any other variety of citrus.

- 1. Prepare the citrus peel as described in the nearby “Lemon twists” section.**

Make sure the citrus flesh is removed from the rind.

- 2. Place a lit match between the cocktail and the twist, which should be rind-side down; bring the rind closer to the flame, approaching at a 45 degree angle from above.**

- 3. When the peel is very close to the match, give the peel a good squeeze with your thumb and forefinger to squirt the oil into the flame.**

A small burst of fire should brush the liquid in your glass. After it's lit, you can choose to drop the peel into the cocktail.

- 4. Practice, practice, practice.**

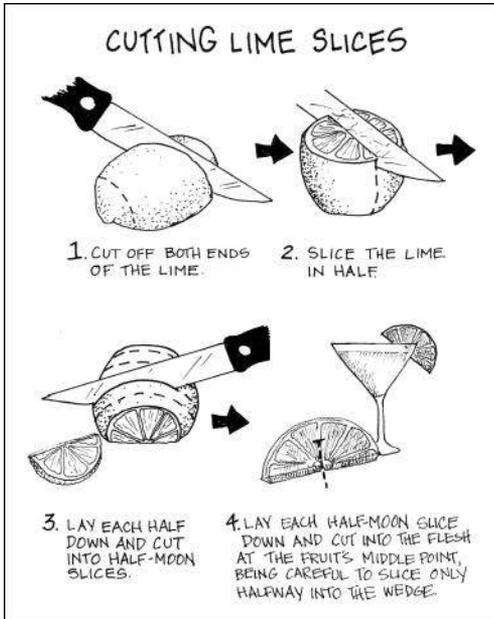
After a while, it will come easy.

## *Lime slices*

The next few steps and Figure 2-3 show you how to cut lime slices.

- 1. Cut off both ends of the lime.**
- 2. Slice the lime in half.**
- 3. Lay each half down and cut it into half-moon slices.**
- 4. Lay each half-moon slice down and cut into the flesh at the fruit's middle point, being careful to slice only halfway into the wedge.**

This slot will hold the garnish in place on the rim of your glass.



*Illustration by Elizabeth Kurtzman*

**Figure 2-3:** Cutting lime slices.

## *Lemon and lime wedges*

Figure 2-4 illustrates the following steps for cutting wedges.

1. Slice the lemon or lime in half the long way.
2. Lay the cut halves down and halve them again.
3. Cut wedges from the lemon or lime quarters.

### **Don't forget the Maraschino cherries**

All kinds of drinks are garnished with Maraschino cherries, including the kid-friendly Shirley Temple and the more adult Manhattan. You can find

Maraschino cherries in small jars at any food store, and the best thing about them is that you don't have to cut them before serving.

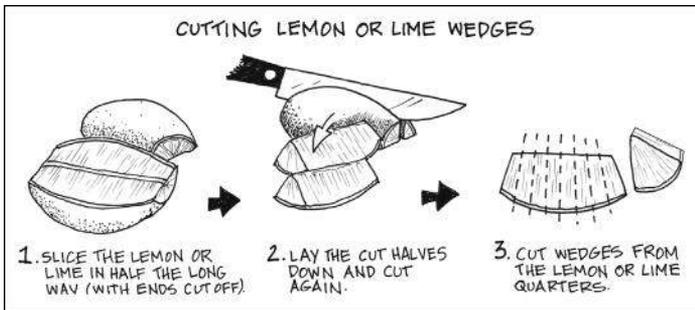


Illustration by Elizabeth Kurtzman

**Figure 2-4:** Cutting lemon or lime wedges.

## Pineapple wedges

Figure 2-5 and the following steps show you how to cut pineapple wedges.

1. Cut off the top and bottom of the pineapple.
2. From top to bottom, cut the pineapple in half.
3. Lay the half pineapple down and cut it in half again.
4. Remove the core section of the pineapple quarters.
5. Cut wedges.

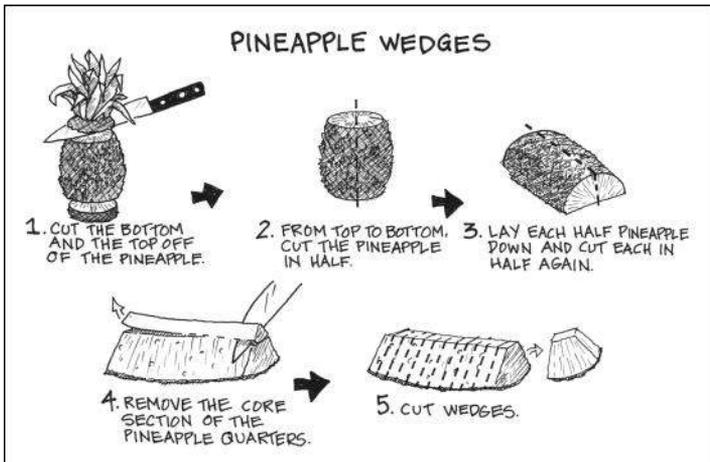


Illustration by Elizabeth Kurtzman

**Figure 2-5:** Cutting pineapple wedges.

## *Cucumbers*

Long cucumber wedges make great garnishes for Bloody Marys and some Martinis. Here's how you slice them:

- 1. Cut off the ends of the cucumber.**
- 2. Cut the cucumber lengthwise into two pieces.**
- 3. Cut the two pieces in half again.**

You now have four pieces of cucumber for garnish. You may also slice the cucumber in  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-thick wheels, but you probably knew that already.

## *Opening Wine and Champagne Bottles*

Opening bottles doesn't take much skill — just a little practice. And the more you practice, the more wine or champagne you have to drink. Score!

### *Wine bottles*

To open a wine bottle, you want to use a waiter's opener, which I show you in Chapter 1. Then go through these steps:

- 1. Using the blade on the opener, cut the lead foil or capsule at the middle of the bulge near the bottle neck.**
- 2. Remove the foil and wipe the bottle top with a cloth to remove any mold or foreign particles.**
- 3. Line up the screw or worm directly over the bottle, and with gentle downward pressure, screw the worm clockwise into the cork.**

Don't break the end of the cork, and screw in just enough to extract the cork.

- 4. Attach the lever of the opener to the lip on top of the bottle, and while holding the bottle firmly, slowly lift the cork straight up.**



5. **Wipe the neck of the bottle.**
6. **Present the cork to your guest and pour a small amount of wine into his or her glass.**

If the wine is to your guest's satisfaction, pour more. Keep your towel handy to wipe the neck of the bottle as you pour the wine for other guests.

## *Champagne and sparkling wine bottles*

You don't use a corkscrew when opening sparkling wine bottles — you simply use your hands.

1. **Remove the wine hood and foil capsule.**
2. **Hold the bottle at an angle and point it away from you and anyone else (and anything valuable).**
3. **While holding the cork in one hand, twist the bottle with the other hand and gently remove the cork.**

Remember, twist the bottle, not the cork.

4. **Just before the cork is about to pop, place a bar towel over the cork and bottle and loosen it the rest of the way.**

The towel will catch the cork and prevent it from becoming a UFO.



Keep another towel handy in case the bottle bubbles over after you remove the cork. To avoid the bubbling, don't shake the bottle before opening.

## *Making Simple Syrup*

Several cocktail recipes call for simple syrup. To make it, dissolve one part sugar in one part boiling water and reduce the mixture over low heat, stirring frequently, until it thickens. It shouldn't take more than a couple of minutes.