

Introduction

When my husband Dan and I started house-hunting in the tepid last-grasping month of late winter 2002, we had a list of things we desperately wanted as new homeowners. After 10 years in a one-bedroom brownstone apartment in Carroll Gardens, Brooklyn, we grew weary of hauling our laundry to the Laundromat, driving around and around the block to jockey for a coveted parking space within some kind of non-marathon walking distance from our front door, and listening to the F train subway rattle by our kitchen window (although, I admit, I found that a little romantic).

More than anything, though, we wanted space. Not just for clothes or furniture and all other forms of random stuff, but for entertaining. There's nothing we both like better than throwing a big ol' party to get friends and family together.

When we walked through the door of the house we would eventually call home, we, like a lot of other first-time home buyers, got that feeling. We knew this was The One. But the thing that confirmed it? The full-on, brass-railed, lights-mirror-taps-whole-shebang old-fashioned chestnut wood bar in the basement. Neither of us had ever seen anything like this outside of an actual, real bar. We looked at each other, smiled, and said, "We'll take it."

Since we moved in two-plus years ago, we've thrown many a party. Being a food and spirits writer by trade, it's something I take great interest in keeping up with. What did we run out of quickly? What didn't go? What mixer or liqueur would have really been great to have on hand? What's the latest cocktail making the scene we could replicate for our own guests? And on and on.

How to Use This Book

When I started thinking about what would make a cocktail book most useful to me, two things came to mind. One, I would want a lot of useful how-to information without a lot of clutter and gabbiness—some fun facts, a little history, and a lot of practical, useful, easy-to-understand information.

xii The Complete Idiot's Guide to Bartending

That's what you find in **Part 1, "Stepping Up to the Brass Rail."** This is where you learn to discern your *resposado* from your *añejo*; your Scotch from your bourbon. What's the difference between brandy and cognac? Look no further! Want to know if sake is supposed to be hot or cold? Here's where you'll find your answer. You also get great "grocery lists" for when it comes time to stock your own bar (from minimum to all-out maximum home-bar potential), what glasses to use, measurements and equivalents, and a shaker full of great advice on all things mixing.

And then there's **Part 2, "The Recipes"**—1,500 of them! I arranged this massive assortment of mixables by liquor. Why? Because when I want to make a cocktail, 9 times out of 10 I know what liquor I want to use. I bet you do, too. If you're in the mood for gin, turn to the gin chapter (Chapter 6). Want to find a new way with whisky? There's a whole Scotch and Canadian world to discover there (Chapter 10). And if you want to peruse all the drinks in this book alphabetically, simply turn to the handy-dandy Index of Drinks in the back for a full-on listing of each and every concoction compiled.

Extras

Along the way I wanted to share a few bits and pieces of information with you. This info has been neatly placed into three different sidebar categories:



Cocktail Conversation

These are full of useful tips and fun facts, all of which are sure to be useful at your next sipping *soirée*—even if only to liven up the conversation.



Liquor Lingo

Never heard of *Strega*? Don't know much about *crème de menthe*? Liquor Lingos define all that befuddles you.



Spills

It's much better to avoid a mess than to worry about spilled sake. Here you get advanced notice on possible pratfalls and how to avert them.

Acknowledgments

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Of course, I wouldn't have happily consumed half the cocktails I have without the help of some really great people I'm lucky enough to call my friends. You know who you are.

Special Thanks to the Technical Reviewer

The Complete Idiot's Guide to Bartending was reviewed by an expert who double-checked the accuracy of what you'll learn here, to help us ensure

that this book gives you everything you need to know about bartending. Special thanks are extended to John James.

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