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MAYBE you've been watching too many Thin Man movies. Maybe the economy has made you realize the virtues of entertaining at home. Or maybe your favorite neighborhood bar has inspired you to step up your own game. Whatever the reason, you've decided it's time to set up a home bar you can be proud of. We know this can seem like a daunting undertaking: With the seemingly infinite varieties of spirits and gear out there, it's hard to know what you actually need, and what's an unnecessary expense. That's why we've laid out everything you need to create the home bar of your dreams, whether you're just starting or you're ready to take your existing setup to the next level. We spoke with bartending pros across the country to get the most practical tips for stocking and using your home bar to best effect, and we scouted out some fun recipes you can make along the way. Before long, you'll have a bar even Nick and Nora Charles would be impressed by.



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MARTIN MILLER'S

IMPORTED

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TIP: In the beginning, make sure your glasses simply cover the basics. And don't be afraid to buy vintage or get creative with the types of glasses you use (the coupes pictured here came from a thrift store). "Unless you can afford to invest in a bunch of glassware, go with what you have on hand," says New York bartender Don Lee. "You can put an up drink in a rocks glass."

> TIP: If you're limited on space or don't want to invest in an expensive bar or cabinets, a small rolling cart can be a perfect beginner's option.

TIP: Your first cocktail book should be basic yet comprehensive, with a way to search drinks by base spirit and by name. With a range of easy and reliable classic and contemporary recipes, Dale DeGroff's Essential Cocktail is a great choice for every level of home bartending.

TIP: Good ice is a must for every home bar, but it doesn't need to be expensive or complicated. For instance, Tovolo sells inexpensive silicon trays (pictured here) that make perfect cubes. And to make cracked ice, simply put some cubes in hand towel and break them up with a mallet or muddler. You can even break up a couple of cubes in your hand by carefully hitting them with a back of a barspoon.

BEGINNING IS OFTEN THE SCARIEST PART, when it's hard to see beyond the initial expense of starting your home bar. But look at it this way: A bottle of good gin generally costs less than a round of quality Martinis for you and your friends, and lasts a lot longer. Plus, you don't have to take out a second mortgage to have a bar worth showing off; with just the dozen bottles shown here, you can make hundreds of cocktails. And understand that the bottles listed here are suggestions—if you don't like Campari, you don't have to stock it. Try an anisette like Herbsaint or absinthe instead. Or if you're a fan of Sidecars, stock brandy. After all, it's your bar.

101 BAR KIT

BOTTLES

Bourbon Campari Cointreau (or other quality triple sec) Dry vermouth Gin Gold rum Grand Marnier Maraschino liqueur Reposado tequila Sweet vermouth White rum Vodka

MIXERS

Angostura bitters Cola Fresh lemons Fresh limes Grenadine Orange bitters Peychaud's bitters Quality bottled fruit juices Seltzer or club soda Simple syrup Sugar cubes Tonic

GARNISHES

Fresh citrus and other fruit Fresh herbs Olives Maraschino cherries

TOOLS

Barspoon Bar towels Bottles for storing syrup Channel knife and zester Citrus juicer Cobbler (three-piece) cocktail shaker Cocktail picks Corkscrew Fine-mesh strainer Ice cube molds Small knife Straws

GLASSWARE

Cocktail Collins or highball Old Fashioned White wine

BOOKS

Bartender's Bible by Gary Regan Bartender's Black Book by Stephen Kittredge Cunningham Home Bar Basics by Dave Stolte The Essential Bartender's Guide by Robert Hess The Essential Cocktail by Dale DeGroff Mr. Boston: Official Bartender's Guide by Anthony Giglio with Jim Meehan



A PERFECT 101 COCKTAIL: ROSITA

cocktail can be, even when it's made with fairly basic

1 1/2 oz. reposado tequila $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. sweet vermouth 1 dash Angostura bitters Cracked and cubed ice Tools: barspoon, three-piece shaker Glass: Old Fashioned Garnish: lemon twist

OTHER 101 COCKTAILS TO TRY

Americano, Black Rose, Bourbon Crusta, Bronx, Presidente, Satan's Whiskers (seen in opening spread),

201

CONGRATULATIONS, you've mastered the basics. Now it's time to start exploring the world of flavors that cocktails can offer, and to learn some more advanced techniques. This is the stage when you begin trying out more unusual liqueurs and even create your own infused spirits. This also is a great time to consider hosting a cocktail party.

201 BAR KIT

Everything from 101, plus....

BOTTLES

Absinthe Amaretto Applejack Apricot brandy Averna (or other amaro) Benedictine Brandy Cachaça Cognac Crème de cacao Crème de menthe Dark rum Drambuie Dubonnet Green Chartreuse Irish whiskey Lillet Pimm's **Rhum Agricole** Rye whiskey St. Germain Scotch whisky Silver tequila Sparkling wine

MIXERS

Fresh oranges Ginger beer Grapefruit bitters Grenadine, homemade Honey syrup Orange flower water Orgeat Peach bitters

GARNISHES

Candied ginger Cocktail onions Homemade olives and cherries Marmalade Pickled vegetables

TOOLS

Blender Boston shaker Hawthorn strainer Ice crusher Jars for making infusions Muddler Pitcher Small bowls for garnishes Swizzle sticks Vegetable/citrus peeler

GLASSWARE

Chimney Cordial Flute Snifter

BOOKS

The American Cocktail by the Editors of Imbibe Magazine The Art of the Bar by Jeff Hollinger and Rob Schwartz The Savoy Cocktail Book by Harry Cradock Vintage Spirits & Forgotten Cocktails by Ted Haigh

OTHER 201 COCKTAILS TO TRY

Amaretto Sour, Bee's Knees, Bobby Burns, Caipirinha, Champagne Cocktail, Chicago, Corpse Reviver #2, Dark and Stormy, Dubonnet Cocktail, Flamingo, French 75, Jack Rose, Japanese, Jewel, Last Word, Mai Tai, Mimosa, Monkey Gland, Morning Glory, Moscow Mule, Pimm's Cup, Prohibition, Rob Roy, Sidecar, Stinger, Tuxedo, 20th Century, Vesper



A PERFECT 201 COCKTAIL: MARKER MAN

San Francisco bartender Kevin Diedrich demonstrates how a simple infusion can add depth to a cocktail with this blueberryflavored marvel.

2 oz. blueberry-infused bourbon (Diedrich uses Maker's Mark)
1/2 oz. Benedictine
1/2 oz. dry vermouth
2 dashes peach bitters
Ice
Tools: barspoon, mixing tin, Hawthorn strainer
Glass: cocktail

Stir all ingredients in a mixing tin, strain into chillec glass and garnish.

To make blueberry-infused bourbon, add 3 pints of blueberries to a 750-ml. bottle of bourbon. Let sit for three weeks and then strain bourbon into a clean glass jar or bottle.

Kevin Diedrich, San Francisco



TIP: 201 is a great time to start using a twopiece Boston shaker, the preferred tool for pros. These can take some practice, and bartender Don Lee says this tip is a must: "When you shake with a Boston shaker, be sure the smaller tin is facing back and behind you. So if the worst happens and the tin comes off mid-shake, you don't wind up with ice-cold drink all over your shirt."



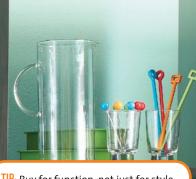
TIP: Have an iPhone? There are some great apps out there for cocktail enthusiasts, including one called Cocktails Made Easy (in which all recipes are made from a stock of just 14 bottles) and one from the experts at Cocktaildb.com.



TIP: If you have the space and time, growing herbs that you use frequently in cocktails is a moneysaver and a convenient way to guarantee that you'll always have a fresh garnish on hand.









TIP: Buy for function, not just for style. "You might think that swizzle stick with the smiley face will look great, but if it's uncomfortable to use, it isn't the right tool for the job," says Adam Lantheaume, owner of the Boston Shaker, a bar-supply store in Boston.



TIP: Ready to experiment with homemade syrups and/or infusions? Use whatever herbs, spices or fruits you have on hand. Needing to put some mint to use? Make a mint simple syrup. Have some extra blueberries on hand? Try adding them to bourbon for the Marker Man recipe on the opposite page.

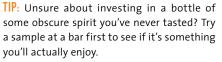




TIP: Crushed ice is essential for many cocktails, but if you don't want to buy an ice crusher, just put some cubes in a hand towel and break them up with a mallet. Many blenders, like the Vita-Mix pictured here, can also make crushed ice.

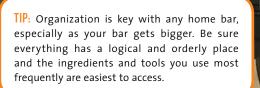


TIP: By 301, you're ready to collect some novelty items. Think about tiki glasses, julep cups, absinthe spoons, soda siphons—the items you've had on your wish list since you first started your home bar. And as with other gadgets in your home bar, don't feel pressured to buy new—check eBay or your local vintage shops for special deals and unique finds.











IP: Homemade "shrubs" or vinegars can add a level of depth to your cocktails. (For a recipe for blood-orange gastrique, see imbibemagazine.com.)





30

YOUR FRIDGE IS FULL of homemade shrubs and syrups, and your collection of spirits rivals that found in many professional bars. No doubt about it, you have earned your doctorate in home bartending. And, just as most post-docs wind up doing, you're ready to specialize. Decide what in the cocktail world fascinates you most-be it tiki drinks, Savoy classics or modern bar-chef experiments—and really delve into the complexities. Start inventing your own cocktails, syrups and infusions. And, hey, you know that spare room in the basement? Now might be a good time to convert it into a wet bar.

301 BAR KIT

Everything from 101 and 201, plus....

BOTTLES

Añjeo tequila Aperol Aquavit Batavia arrack Calvados Cherry Heering Crème de cassis Crème de violette Cvnar Demerara rum Domaine de Canton Fernet Branca Genever Pear brandy Pimento dram Pisco Port Punt e Mes Sake Sherry Sloe gin Strega Velvet falernum Yellow Chartreuse

MIXERS

Additional bitters Cream of coconut Eggs Heavy cream Horseradish Shrubs (homemade vinegars) Unusual sodas

GARNISHES

Cinnamon sticks and other whole spices (nutmeg, anise and clove) Edible fresh flowers Fresh pineapple

TOOLS

Absinthe spoons Extra shakers Frother Citrus press Nutmeg grater Julep strainer Soda siphon Matches or lighter

GLASSWARE

Absinthe Cordial Julep Punch (with bowl) Tiki Toddy

BOOKS

Artisanal Cocktails by Scott Beattie Bitters: A Spirited History of a Classic *Cure-All* by Brad Thomas Parsons The Gentleman's Companion by Charles Baker Imbibe! by David Wondrich Sippin' Safari by Jeff Berry The Drunken Botanist by Amy Stewart The Fine Art of Mixing Drinks by David A. Embury The PDT Cocktail Book by Jim Meehan

OTHER 301 COCKTAILS TO TRY

American Beauty, Attention, Aviation, Blood and Sand, Clover Club, Hanky Panky, Kir Royale, Mayfair, Painkiller, Piña Colada, Pink Lady, Pisco Sour, Planter's Punch, Seville, Singapore Sling, Sloe Gin Fizz, Réveillon, Ramos Gin Fizz, Trident, Zombie



A PERFECT 301 COCKTAIL: PAUL'S CLUB

classic, The Gentleman's Companion. *It may take a couple tries*

2 oz. London Dry-style gin
1 oz. Concord vinegar (see below)
¼ oz. simple syrup
Ice cubes (preferably more than one-inch square)
Tools: barspoon, mixing glass, Hawthorn strainer
Glass: cocktail or coupe
Garnish: 1/4 oz. pastis or absinthe poured over the back of a spoon to float on top of the drink
Stir ingredients, strain into chilled glass and garnish.
To make Concord vinegar, add 5 lbs. of crushed Concord grap to 1 liter of white wine vinegar. Let sit for 1 week and strain in

TIP: "Mint is so abused," says Don Lee. "Use a flat-bot-tomed muddler rather than one with teeth. You want to press the mint, not break it. When you break the leaf, you release chlorophyll, which is bitter. If you have to muddle more than just mint—like, say, some fruit—put the mint under the fruit so it's protected."

> TIP: Don't be afraid to experiment with switching out ingredients in a recipe. It will not only teach you more about what makes a good cocktail, but also could provide some delicious discoveries. "A Gin Julep is actually quite refreshing," says Don Lee.

> > TIP: Once you've graduated to a Boston shaker, you'll need a Hawthorn strainer and, ideally, a julep strainer (available for as little as \$3). A Hawthorn strainer is great for shaken drinks, while a julep strainer is perfect for keeping ice shards at bay in stirred cocktails.

TIP: Always use fresh citrus in your cocktails. There's no replacement for the flavor of fresh juice in mixed drinks.

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