

SHAKE IT UP

* Even classic cocktails can use a reinvention

SPRING IS THE TIME OF REBIRTH, revival and reawakening. It's the time to throw open the doors, clear the junk out of the backs of closets, freshen things up and bring some fun back into our lives, cocktails included.

Don't misunderstand: Classics are classics for a reason. I'm the first to order a perfectly chilled Bombay Sapphire martini, straight up with just a smidge of vermouth and three juicy olives. I'm also a sucker for a perfect gimlet, with just the right amount of lime to pucker your lips. I can't imagine getting through a sweltering Georgia night without one. They're so refreshing.

With no disrespect meant to these time-honored cocktails, I have to acknowledge that even the beloved classics can feel a little predictable and maybe even a bit stuffy and boring. On occasion we want something more exciting, fresh, lively and served with a side of intrigue.

Every once in awhile you just have to shake it up. Say you love an icy cold margarita, but you just happen to have scored a delicious seedless watermelon at the farmers market. Why not chunk it up, toss the pieces into baggies and throw them in the freezer. The next time the urge strikes for a tequila-flavored cocktail, substitute these ruby beauties for the ice. *Voilà*, you have a watermelon margarita.



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THE SPRITZ

Written by Donna Brousseau / Photographed by Kyle Ripley, Haigwood Studios

Another one I love to play around with is the classic mojito. Like other cocktails, it has known variations in the past, but it traditionally consists of rum, mint, sugar, lime and sparkling water. Why not throw some blueberries in the mix or maybe some muddled strawberries or peaches? It is Georgia, after all. Or, for a healthy spin (and maybe a little less guilt) include cucumber and basil topped off with a scoop of lime sorbet. You can even swap out the liquor for gin, vodka or whatever else strikes your fancy.

As you can see, you're only limited by your imagination, and the following establishments have got it right. From a gorgeous cilantro- and cucumber-infused gimlet to a smoky mezcal negroni, here are six souped-up classic cocktails that will add a little sparkle and extra pep to your spring.

Netspritz and Chill

Recipe provided by Donetto

Yield: 1 drink

- 1 ounce Aperol
- 3 dashes angostura orange bitters
- 3/4 ounce **Limonata** (recipe included)
- 1/2 ounce **Rosemary Syrup** (recipe included)
- 3 ounces prosecco
- 1 lemon twist for garnish

Place all ingredients in a cocktail shaker with ice. Shake vigorously until well mixed. Strain into a champagne flute and top with chilled prosecco. Garnish with a lemon twist.

Limonata

- 1 cup white sugar
- 1 cup fresh-squeezed lemon juice
- 1/8 ounce Scrappy's Lavender Bitters

For the Limonata

In a large container, combine all ingredients with 6 cups hot water and continue to stir until all sugar is dissolved. Store in refrigerator until needed.

Rosemary Syrup

- 8 ounces granulated sugar
- 5 rosemary sprigs

For the Rosemary Syrup

In a small pot on stove, simmer 8 ounces filtered water and sugar until all sugar is dissolved. Remove from heat and stir in rosemary sprigs. Let infuse for 6 hours. Remove rosemary and store in refrigerator until needed.

DONETTO

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Florence Fizz

Recipe provided by Colletta

Yield: 1 drink

- 1 1/2 ounces Bummer & Lazarus Gin
- 1 ounce Domaine De Canton Ginger Liqueur
- 1/2 ounce lemon juice
- 1/2 ounce lime juice
- 1/2 ounce **Simple Syrup** (recipe included)
- 1 lemon twist for garnish

In a cocktail shaker with ice, place all ingredients. Shake vigorously until well mixed. Strain into a rocks glass with ice and serve with lemon twist.

Simple Syrup

- 8 ounces granulated sugar

For the Simple Syrup

In a small pot on stove, simmer 8 ounces water and sugar until all sugar is dissolved. Remove from heat and store in refrigerator until needed.

COLLETTA

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THE GIMLET

Cilantro Gimlet

Recipe by Laurend Abraham, Owner, Cabo Cantina

Yield: 1 drink

- 2 ounces Absolut vodka
- 1 ounce fresh lime juice
- 6 sprigs cilantro, finely chopped
- 1 ounce agave nectar
- 2 cucumber slices, peeled and chopped roughly
- 1 cucumber slice for garnish

In a cocktail shaker with ice, place all ingredients. Shake vigorously until well mixed. Strain into a martini glass and garnish with cucumber slice.

Coco Rita

Recipe by Laurend Abraham, Owner, Cabo Cantina

Yield: 1 drink

- 1 1/2 ounces Casamigos Blanco tequila
- 3/4 ounce Cointreau
- 3/4 ounce lime juice
- 1/2 ounce coconut milk
- lime slice and coconut shavings for garnish

In a cocktail shaker with ice, place all ingredients. Shake vigorously until well mixed. Strain into a martini glass and garnish with lime slice and coconut shavings.

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THE MARGARITA

Mezcal Negroni

Recipe by Don Pirone, Bar Manager, Bellina Alimentari

Yield: 1 drink

- 1 ounce Pelotón de la Muerte mezcal
- 3/4 ounce Cynar liqueur
- 1/2 ounce St. George Bruto Americano
- 1/2 ounce Cappelletti Aperitivo Americano Rosso
- 1/4 ounce Cocchi Storico Vermouth di Torino
- 1 orange swatch for garnish

In a cocktail shaker with ice, place all ingredients. Stir until mixed. Strain into a rocks glass over ice. Garnish with orange swatch.

BELLINA ALIMENTARI

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THE NEGRONI



Sake Sangria

Recipe provided by O-Ku

Although, not really considered a classic cocktail, no spring patio party would work without a pitcher full of sangria! For their upgraded twist on this springtime staple, O-Ku swaps wine for sake in their refreshing sangria.

Yield: 2 drinks

- 1 quart cleaned and topped strawberries
- 2/3 cup fresh mint leaves
- 2 ounces lime juice
- 3/4 cup simple syrup
- 3/4 cup water
- 1 liter Gekkeikan Sake
- mint for garnish

In a blender, place all ingredients except sake. Blend on medium for 1 minute. Pour mixture into pitcher and mix in sake. Chill, covered, until ready to serve. Garnish with mint.

O-KU

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