

Bartender Training Manual

For your first shifts behind a working bar: the station, the checklists, prep, service and speed, measuring, safety and responsible service. Your bar's own rules come first; this is the common ground.

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THE STATION, ZONE BY ZONE

ZONE	WHAT LIVES THERE	THE RULE
Ice well	Drink ice, and the scoop in its holder	Ice is food: nothing else goes in, and never a glass
Speed rail	The well spirits and the most-used modifiers, in a set order	Same order at every station; every bottle back in its slot
Bar mat	Where drinks are built, right in front of you	Build over the mat, not over the bar top
Garnish tray	Cut citrus, cherries, olives, picks	Covered and cold; tongs or picks, never fingers
Tools	Jiggers, tins, mixing glass, bar spoons, strainers	Same place every shift; rinse between drinks
Back bar	Call and top-shelf bottles on display	Labels facing out, bottles wiped
Sinks	Dump sink; wash, rinse and sanitize sinks	Sanitizer at the right strength: test it each shift

TOOLS AT EVERY STATION

- Two double jiggers
- Two bar spoons
- A muddler
- Bottle opener and wine key
- Two sets of shaker tins
- Hawthorne and julep strainers
- Y-peeler, paring knife, board
- Clean bar towels
- A mixing glass
- A fine strainer
- An ice scoop
- Marker and tape for labels

YOUR FIRST WEEK

- ☐ Shadow a senior bartender for a full shift
 - ☐ Make every house spec at least once, measured
 - ☐ Find the first-aid kit, the fire extinguisher, the exits

- ☐ Learn the speed rail order until you can grab blind
 - ☐ Learn the register: opening, splitting, closing tabs
 - ☐ Read the house rules on ID, last call and refusing service

MISE EN PLACE

French for “everything in its place”. If you have to look for something in a rush, it was not set. Set up the same way every shift, so your hands find things without your eyes.

Opening and Closing Checklists

Tick them off every shift until you no longer need the paper. Every bar adds its own lines: write them in the blanks.

OPENING

- ☐ Read the log and the 86 board: what is out, what is new
- ☐ Ice well filled with fresh ice; scoop in its holder
- ☐ Speed rail stocked in house order; pourers clean and tight
- ☐ Backups of every well spirit and the best sellers within reach
- ☐ Citrus juiced, strained, labeled with date and time
- ☐ Syrups checked: date, smell, clarity; bottles labeled
- ☐ Garnish cut for the shift, covered and cold
- ☐ Glassware clean, chip-checked and stocked; coupes chilling
- ☐ Tools set at every station
- ☐ Sinks filled; sanitizer tested with a strip
- ☐ Bar mats down, clean towels out
- ☐ Soda gun tested; mixers and juices cold
- ☐ Open wine and vermouth checked by date and taste
- ☐ Napkins, straws, picks and menus stocked
- ☐ Register open, bank counted, if you handle cash
- ☐ Bar top and stools clean: look from a guest's seat

CLOSING

- ☐ Last call and close at the house time
- ☐ Tabs closed; register counted the house way
- ☐ Garnish that keeps covered and labeled; the rest thrown out
- ☐ Juice and dairy labeled and cold, or out by house rule
- ☐ Syrups capped, dated, refrigerated
- ☐ Bottles wiped; pourers capped or soaked overnight
- ☐ Tins, tools and strainers washed, rinsed, sanitized, air-dried
- ☐ Ice well burned out with hot water, wiped and left dry
- ☐ Soda gun nozzle soaked; holster cleaned
- ☐ Bar mats washed; sinks and drains cleaned
- ☐ Restocked for the opener: bottles, glasses, napkins
- ☐ Empties and breakage logged; 86'd items written down
- ☐ Trash, recycling and glass out; floor swept and mopped
- ☐ Coolers shut; equipment off; locked up the house way

OUR BAR ADDS

OUR BAR ADDS

SHIFT LOG

DATE · SHIFT · BARTENDER

86'D AND RUNNING LOW

BREAKAGE, SPILLS, INCIDENTS

FOR THE NEXT SHIFT

DATE · SHIFT · BARTENDER

86'D AND RUNNING LOW

BREAKAGE, SPILLS, INCIDENTS

FOR THE NEXT SHIFT

Prep: Citrus, Syrups and Garnish

Prep decides how a rush goes. Make what the shift will use, label it, keep it cold and throw out what is past its time.

JUICE FROM ONE FRUIT

FRUIT	JUICE	FOR 1 CUP
Lime	about 1 oz (30 ml)	8 limes
Lemon	about 1½ oz (45 ml)	5–6 lemons
Orange	2–2½ oz (60–75 ml)	3–4 oranges
Grapefruit	4–6 oz (120–180 ml)	about 2

1 cup is 8 oz (240 ml). Yields vary with size and season: measure your own fruit once and write the numbers here.

JUICE

Squeeze before each shift, and only what the shift will use: citrus juice is at its best the day it is squeezed.

Strain out seeds and pulp, **label** it with the date and time, keep it cold.

Taste it before service. Dull? Squeeze fresh.

GARNISH: CUT, COUNT, KEEP

GARNISH	HOW TO CUT	FROM ONE FRUIT	KEEPS
Wedges	Top and tail; halve lengthwise; 3 or 4 from each half	6–8 per lime or lemon	the shift, covered, cold
Wheels	Slice across, ¼ inch (6 mm) thick; notch to the center	about 6 per lime	the shift, covered, cold
Twists	Y-peeler, top to bottom, no pith; about 1 × 2–3 inches	6–8 per lemon or orange	a few hours, damp towel over
Mint	Pick sprigs with fresh tops; keep the leaves whole	—	a few days, stems in water
Cherries, olives	Keep them in their liquid	—	covered; serve with a pick

SYRUPS

- Make them from the house recipe, by weight, the same way every time.
- Cool them before bottling; keep them in the fridge.
- Out if it fizzes, smells sour, grows mold or, if clear, turns cloudy.

LABEL EVERYTHING

Name, date, time and your initials on every bottle and container.

First in, first out: new stock goes behind the old.

If it is not labeled, it goes. **When in doubt, throw it out.**

DAILY PREP SHEET

ITEM	PAR	ON HAND	TO MAKE	DONE
Lime juice				
Lemon juice				
Simple syrup				
Lime wedges				
Citrus twists				

Par is how much the shift needs. To make = par minus on hand.

Service, Speed and Specs

Speed is not hurry. It is every bottle, tool and glass where your hand expects it, and every move doing two jobs.

STEPS OF SERVICE

- 1 Acknowledge every guest at once**
eye contact, a nod, "I'll be right with you", even mid-rush
- 2 Set a napkin, offer a menu and water**
the napkin tells the team this guest is greeted
- 3 Take the order, repeat it back**
up or on the rocks, which spirit; check ID if in doubt
- 4 Make the drinks**
glassware first, then the round in order
- 5 Serve**
on the napkin, in front of the guest; name the drink
- 6 Check back**
after the first sip: is it right?
- 7 Clear and reset**
empties away, wipe the spot, restock as you go
- 8 Close the tab, thank the guest**
and invite them back

SPEED HABITS

- Every bottle back in its place, label out, every time.
- Work two-handed: one hand pours, the other reaches for the next bottle.
- Stir with one hand while you build with the other.
- When your seal is reliable, shake two tins at once.
- Never walk empty-handed: carry empties back on every trip.
- Clean as you go: rinse tins between drinks, wipe spills at once.

HOUSE CLASSICS TO KNOW COLD



Old Fashioned OLD FASHIONED · STIRRED
2 oz bourbon or rye whiskey · ¼ oz simple syrup · 2 dashes Angostura bitters



Dry Martini MARTINI · STIRRED
2½ oz London dry gin · ½ oz dry vermouth · 1 dash orange bitters



Daiquiri COUPE · SHAKEN
2 oz white rum · ¾ oz fresh lime juice · ¾ oz simple syrup



Whiskey Sour OLD FASHIONED · SHAKEN
2 oz bourbon · ¾ oz fresh lemon juice · ¾ oz simple syrup · ½ oz egg white

BUILDING A ROUND

- 1 Read the whole order; group the drinks by method.**
- 2 Set out every glass: ice in those served on ice, chill those served up.**
- 3 Build each drink in its tin or mixing glass: cheapest ingredient first, base spirit last.**
- 4 Ice and stir the stirred drinks, then shake the shaken ones.**
- 5 Strain everything, then top the long drinks with soda or bubbles.**
- 6 Garnish, check each drink once, serve them together.**
- 7 Whatever fades fastest goes last**
bubbles, foam, anything frozen, and beer

MEASURING AND CONSISTENCY

Use the jigger

Hold it level, right over the tin, so a drip lands in the drink. Fill it to the brim, not a dome over it, and tip it in with one turn of the wrist.

Free pour, with caution

Bars that free-pour teach a count with a speed pourer, and counts differ: one count is ¼ oz in some bars, ½ oz in others. Pour your count into a jigger at the start of every shift.

If your bar measures, measure.

Straw-taste

Dip a clean straw, cap it with a finger, taste, and throw the straw away. One straw, one taste.



Manhattan COUPE · STIRRED
2 oz rye whiskey · 1 oz sweet vermouth · 2 dashes Angostura bitters



Negroni OLD FASHIONED · STIRRED
1 oz gin · 1 oz Campari · 1 oz sweet vermouth



Margarita MARGARITA GLASS · SHAKEN
2 oz blanco tequila · 1 oz fresh lime juice · ¾ oz orange liqueur



Espresso Martini MARTINI · SHAKEN
1½ oz vodka · 1 oz fresh espresso, cooled · ¾ oz coffee liqueur · ¼ oz simple syrup

Clean, Safe and Responsible

The rules that protect guests and the people working beside you. Your bar, city and state have their own, so learn those first: this page is general guidance, not legal advice.

ICE IS FOOD

- Scoop with the scoop: never with a glass, never with your hand.
- Keep the scoop in its holder, outside the ice.
- Nothing else goes in the ice well: no bottles, fruit or glasses to chill.
- Ice from a used glass or tin never goes back in the well.

GLASSWARE

- Hold glasses by the stem or base, fingers off the rim.
- Never stack glasses inside each other: they jam and crack.
- Check every glass for chips; a chipped glass goes in the bin.
- No hot water into a frozen glass: it can crack.
- Carry glasses in a rack or on a tray, not stacked in your hands.

CHECKING ID

- 1 Know the legal age where you work: 21 everywhere in the US.
- 2 Check anyone who looks under 30, or as your house rule says, before you pour.
- 3 Take the card out of the wallet and hold it.
- 4 Match the photo, height and eye color to the face in front of you.
- 5 Check the birth date and the expiration date.
- 6 Feel the edges and the laminate; tilt it to see the hologram.
- 7 In doubt, ask for a second ID, or say no politely.

REFUSING SERVICE, POLITELY

Early and in private

Speak to the guest alone, calmly, before things escalate.

Offer something else

Water, food, a soft drink or coffee, and help getting a safe ride home.

MAKE THE EASY CHOICE EASY

Keep water on the bar and offer it with every round. Know the zero-proof drinks on your menu and make them with the same care. Food, a slower pace and a ride home are all part of good service.

GLASS BROKE NEAR THE ICE

1. **Call it:** say "Glass!" so everyone stops scooping.
2. **Burn the ice:** melt the whole well with hot water, every cube, even if you saw where it fell.
3. **Clean and dry** the well, then refill it with fresh ice.
4. **Throw out** open garnish and drinks nearby. Sweep up shards; never pick them up with your fingers.

CALL IT OUT

SAY	WHEN
"Behind!"	passing behind someone
"Corner!"	coming around a blind corner
"Hot!"	carrying anything hot
"Sharp!"	carrying a knife or broken glass

SIGNS A GUEST HAS HAD ENOUGH

- Lowered inhibitions
louder, overly friendly, bothering other guests
- Impaired judgment
drinking faster, ordering doubles, careless with money
- Slower reactions
glassy eyes, slow or slurred speech, losing the thread
- Poor coordination
spilling, stumbling, fumbling with cards or change

About the drink, not the person

"I can't serve you another drink tonight." No labels, no arguing, no bargaining.

Tell the team

Your manager and coworkers, so nobody else serves them; note it in the log.



Zero-proof drinks for every guest

24cocktails.com/occasion/sober

HOUSE SPEC SHEET

[illegible]

- 1 Which of these is stirred, not shaken?
 - a) Daiquiri
 - b) Manhattan
 - c) Whiskey Sour
 - d) Margarita
- 2 A glass breaks near the ice well. You:
 - a) pick out the pieces
 - b) scoop off the top layer
 - c) melt all the ice and refill
 - d) finish the rush first
- 3 Ingredients go into the tin in which order?
 - a) base spirit first
 - b) cheapest first, spirit last
 - c) ice first
 - d) any order
- 4 The spec says $\frac{3}{4}$ oz simple syrup; you have rich 2 : 1. Pour:
 - a) $\frac{1}{4}$ oz
 - b) $\frac{1}{2}$ oz
 - c) $\frac{3}{4}$ oz
 - d) 1 oz
- 5 A guest orders a Martini "dirty". You add:
 - a) more vermouth
 - b) olive brine
 - c) orange bitters
 - d) a lemon twist
- 6 The right way to get ice into a glass:
 - a) dip the glass in
 - b) a clean hand
 - c) the ice scoop
 - d) a jigger
- 7 In a round, which drink do you finish last?
 - a) a neat whiskey
 - b) a stirred Negroni
 - c) a Tom Collins
 - d) a glass of wine
- 8 A guest is slurring and asks for another. You:
 - a) pour a weaker one
 - b) refuse quietly, offer water
 - c) announce it to the bar
 - d) let a coworker serve them

- 1b** Spirits and vermouth only: stirring keeps it clear and silky.
- 3b** A mistake caught early wastes syrup, not whiskey.
- 5b** Dirty means olive brine.
- 7c** Its soda top fades fastest, so it goes last.
- 2c** Burn the ice: slivers are invisible in ice, so every cube goes.
- 4b** Rich syrup is sweeter: about two-thirds as much.
- 6c** A glass can chip into the well; hands are not a utensil.
- 8b** Calm, private and kind; then tell your manager and the team.