

Bartending Basics

The home bar course of 24cocktails on paper: what to buy, why ice matters, how to measure, when to shake or stir, and the first ten drinks to learn. Read one lesson an evening, mix its homework, tick the box.

THE COURSE

- ☐ Lesson 1 · Five bottles and a jigger
what a working home bar needs, and what it does not
- ☐ Lesson 2 · Ice is the main ingredient
why the cheapest thing in the drink matters most
- ☐ Lesson 3 · Measures and proportions
the jigger, and three formulas behind most classics
- ☐ Lesson 4 · Shake, stir, build
three methods for nine drinks in ten
- ☐ Lesson 5 · Your first ten cocktails
a repertoire you can invite friends to



WHAT YOU NEED TO START

Bottles: vodka, gin, white rum, bourbon and tequila. Two of them are enough to begin.
Tools: a double jigger, a shaker, a bar spoon, a strainer.
Fresh: lemons, limes, sugar for syrup, and more ice than you think.

WHERE YOU WILL BE BY LESSON FIVE



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



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



Gin & Tonic HIGHBALL · BUILT
2 oz gin · **4 oz** tonic water



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



The course online, with photos
24cocktails.com/academy/basics

Five Bottles and a Jigger



A working home bar is five bottles, not thirty: vodka, gin, white rum, bourbon and tequila. That five covers most of the world's classics. Around them — the supporting cast you buy as needed: tonic, soda, ginger beer, fresh limes and lemons, simple syrup (sugar and hot water, one to one).

For tools, start with a jigger, a shaker (or a jar with a tight lid), a barspoon and a freezer full of ice. The jigger matters most: drinks fail on free-pouring, not on cheap spirits. The full equipment list with honest substitutes lives in the Guides; the five-bottles-to-ten-cocktails route is in the blog.

- ☐ Homework: assemble your five (two bottles count as a start), tick them in the site's bar finder — it will show what you can already mix.

FIVE BOTTLES, FIRST DRINKS

BOTTLE	DRINKS IT OPENS
Vodka	Moscow Mule, Screwdriver, Cosmopolitan
Gin	Gin & Tonic, Tom Collins, Gimlet, Negroni
White rum	Daiquiri, Mojito, Cuba Libre
Bourbon	Old Fashioned, Whiskey Sour, Mint Julep
Tequila	Margarita, Paloma, Tequila Sunrise

THE TOOLS, AND WHAT WILL DO INSTEAD

- **Double jigger**
or a tablespoon: 1/2 oz a spoon
- **Shaker**
or a jam jar with a tight lid
- **Bar spoon**
or the handle of a long teaspoon
- **Strainer**
or the shaker's lid held ajar; a tea strainer for fine bits
- **Citrus press**
or your hand and a fork
- **Peeler**
for twists: a vegetable peeler is exactly right



Lesson 1 online

24cocktails.com/academy/basics/start

Ice Is the Main Ingredient



Ice does two jobs at once: temperature and dilution. The right amount is more than feels reasonable — fill the glass. The paradox: a full glass of ice melts **SLOWER** than two lonely cubes, so the drink ends up colder and less watery.

Freeze ahead in big moulds: one large cube keeps an Old Fashioned alive for half an hour. Crushed ice for Mojitos comes from cubes in a towel and a few whacks of a rolling pin. And chill your glassware — a warm coupe kills a Daiquiri faster than any measuring mistake.

- ☐ Homework: freeze a full tray of big cubes and build the same drink twice — two cubes versus a full glass. The difference is the whole lesson.

WHICH ICE FOR WHICH DRINK

ICE	USE IT FOR
One large cube	spirit drinks on the rocks: Old Fashioned, Negroni
Cubes	shaking, stirring, every highball
Crushed	juleps, tiki drinks, swizzles
A block	the punch bowl: it melts slowly and keeps the punch cold



Lesson 2 online

24cocktails.com/academy/basics/ice

CLEAR ICE AT HOME

Fill a small picnic cooler with water and freeze it with the lid off. Water freezes from the top down, pushing air and minerals to the bottom.

After about a day, lift out the block and cut away the cloudy part. The clear slab saws into cubes with a bread knife.

Measures and Proportions



An ounce is 30 ml in home rounding, a centilitre is 10 ml, a dash is about a millilitre, a barspoon five. A "part" is a ratio, not a volume: "2 parts gin, 1 part vermouth" works in any glass while the ratio holds.

Nearly all the classics reduce to a few formulas. The sour: 2 parts spirit, 1 part citrus, 1 part sweet — that is the Daiquiri, the Whiskey Sour and the Margarita. Equal thirds — the Negroni. Spirit plus filler at one to three or four — every highball. Knowing the formula lets you repair a drink: too tart — add syrup, flat — add citrus, weak — add spirit.

- ☐ Homework: make a 2:1:1 Daiquiri, taste it, then move the syrup half an ounce each way. Find YOUR balance — that is what proportions are for.

THREE FORMULAS

FORMULA	RATIO	DRINKS
The sour	2 spirit : 1 citrus : 1 sweet	Daiquiri, Whiskey Sour, Margarita
Equal parts	1 : 1 : 1	Negroni, and the Last Word in four
The highball	1 spirit : 3–4 mixer	Gin & Tonic, Cuba Libre, Moscow Mule

THE SAME FORMULAS, DRAWN



Daiquiri COUPE • SHAKEN



Negroni OLD FASHIONED • STIRRED



Gin & Tonic HIGHBALL • BUILT



Lesson 3 online

24cocktails.com/academy/basics/measure

Shake, Stir, Build



Three methods cover nine drinks out of ten. Build — right in the serving glass: ice, pour, one stir (gin & tonic, Cuba Libre). Stir — a gentle 20–30 seconds with a bar spoon for clear, spirit-only drinks: Negroni, Martini, Old Fashioned. Shake — 12–15 hard seconds with ice for anything with juice, syrup, cream or egg.

The rule of thumb: if you can see through it — stir; if it's cloudy — shake. Shaking also aerates: a shaken sour is alive and bright, a stirred one flat. And the reverse: a shaken Martini goes cloudy and loses its silk (Bond was wrong).

- ☐ Homework: make a Daiquiri shaken, then the same one stirred. Compare the texture. From here on you understand the methods instead of memorising them.

THE THREE METHODS

Build

Ice in the serving glass, pour, one stir.

Gin & Tonic, Cuba Libre, Moscow Mule

Stir

20–30 seconds with a bar spoon in a glass of ice, then strain.

Negroni, Martini, Old Fashioned

Shake

12–15 hard seconds with ice, then strain.

anything with juice, syrup, cream or egg

THE RULE OF THUMB

See-through — stir. Cloudy — shake.

Shaking chills, dilutes and adds air: a shaken sour is bright and alive. A stirred drink stays clear and silky.



Lesson 4 online

24cocktails.com/academy/basics/technique

Your First Ten Cocktails



A repertoire that makes guests welcome: Gin & Tonic, Moscow Mule and Cuba Libre — everyday builds. Negroni and Old Fashioned — stirred classics for slow evenings. Daiquiri, Whiskey Sour, Margarita — three faces of the one sour formula. Mojito — muddling and easy summer. Espresso Martini — a showstopper finish with real foam.

Each of the ten teaches its own skill; together they cover all three methods plus citrus, sugar, mint and foam. After that the site's seven thousand recipes open up by themselves — you will recognise familiar formulas under unfamiliar names.

- ☐ Homework: clear all ten in a month, two or three a week. Heart what you make, and the bar finder will show which next bottle unlocks the most new recipes.

THE TEN, WITH THEIR MEASURES



Gin & Tonic HIGHBALL • BUILT
2 oz gin • 4 oz tonic water



Cuba Libre HIGHBALL • BUILT
2 oz white rum • ½ oz fresh lime juice • 4 oz cola



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



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



Mojito HIGHBALL • BUILT
2 oz white rum • ¾ oz fresh lime juice • ¾ oz simple syrup • 8 mint leaves • 2 oz soda water



Moscow Mule COPPER MUG • BUILT
2 oz vodka • ½ oz fresh lime juice • 4 oz ginger beer



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



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



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



Lesson 5 online

24cocktails.com/academy/basics/ten

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