



Dale DeGroff's GREAT FESTIVE COCKTAILS

Please welcome some old favourites as well as some newcomers, as we step into the world of cocktails with the world's best-known expert, Dale DeGroff, King of Cocktails.

Holidays afford us not only an opportunity to gather together and enjoy long cherished traditions but also we have an opportunity to establish new traditions that bring family and friends closer as the years go by and the circle widens.

Traditionally the home bar would be fortified with a couple of special items for visitors: maybe a bottle of anisette or Irish cream liqueur to enrich the after dinner coffee, or a premium scotch like Glenlivet, Chivas Regal or Johnny Walker Black.

New products, especially in the premium and luxury categories, are coming onto the market every day, but help is at hand—a generation of craft bartenders is changing the way we drink. They are crafting exotic concoctions with fresh fruits, herbs and even savoury

ingredients—many of which have never seen the inside of a cocktail glass before. Below are some of my festive holiday suggestions from the best of the new spirits to the cocktails you can craft in your own home.

Those home-crafted cocktails might include variations on classics like the Manhattan or the Old Fashioned or the Negroni, the latter once almost unknown outside of Italy or perhaps a few 5-star hotels in European capitals—these cocktails are now seen in multiple iterations in cocktail bars around the world.

Let me introduce you to some of my old favourites, as well as some completely new spirits and future classic cocktails. The following selection also provides some of these special products, each accompanied with a recipe idea for the festive season.

GIN-BASED



Black Currant Jelly Toddy

This is a winter warmer made with one of the most successful of the new millennium gin brands Hendrick's Gin.

Ingredients

- > 50ml Hendrick's Gin
- > 15ml Honey Syrup (two parts honey mixed with one part warm water)
- > 10ml Pink Clove Cordial by Phillips and Bristol

- > 1tsp Black Currant Preserve
- > 10ml fresh lemon juice
- > 40ml hot water
- > 1 cinnamon stick garnish

Preparation

Assemble all the ingredients except the garnish in a mixing glass and stir well; strain through a tea strainer into a warmed mug. Garnish with a cinnamon stick.



After the Fall

Ingredients

- > 60ml Plymouth Gin
- > 10ml Yellow Chartreuse
- > Wash of Absinthe L'Esprit d'Edouard
- > Dash Gary Regan's Orange Bitters No. 6

Preparation

Stir with ice and strain into a chilled martini glass. Garnish with a green cocktail cherry (lemon or lime cherry from Sable Rosenfeld)

"The Cock-tail is a stimulating liquor, composed of spirits of any kind, sugar, water, and bitters—it is vulgarly called bittered sling, and is supposed to be an excellent electioneering potion, in as much as it renders the heart stout and bold, at the same time that it fuddles the head. It is said, also to be of great use to a democratic candidate: because a person, having swallowed a glass of it, is ready to swallow any thing else."
 — The first recorded definition of the cocktail which appeared in the May 13, 1806, edition of *The Balance and Columbian Repository*, published in Hudson, New York.



French 75

The French 75 is a festive drink and I prefer it in a large goblet, over ice, with fancy garnish; some prefer the more subdued version in a flute with just a lemon zest. The drink is thought by some to have originated at Harry New York Bar in Paris, but none of the editions of Harry McElhone's ABC of Making Drinks mentions the drink. It is more likely from London, perhaps the famous Ciro's. The drink appears in Harry Craddock's Savoy Cocktail Book...

Ingredients

- › 25ml Hayman's Old Tom Gin
- › 25ml simple syrup (one part sugar dissolved into one part water)
- › 20ml fresh lemon juice
- › Chilled champagne, to top up

Preparation

Shake with ice the gin, lemon juice and simple syrup. Strain into a goblet over ice and top with champagne. Decorate with fresh seasonal fruits and mint.



Strawberry Nirvana

The special product in the next recipe is St Germain Elderflower liqueur. This marvellous product is so mixable it has become a staple in bars everywhere, it is hard to find a spirit companion that doesn't like this pleasing floral bouquet of flavour.

Ingredients

- › 45ml Plymouth Gin
- › 8ml Elderflower Liqueur
- › 15ml Honey syrup (2 parts honey to 1 part water)
- › Small piece of fresh ginger

- › thumb nail size
- › 2 or 3 Strawberries
- › 20ml Fresh lemon juice

Method

Muddle the ginger first with the lemon juice then add the strawberries and muddle again. Add the remaining ingredients and shake well with ice and strain into a chilled cocktail glass. Garnish with a fresh half strawberry by making a cut on the bottom of the strawberry and perching it on the rim of the glass.

WHISKEY-BASED (US AND IRISH)

Let's look first at two special products, important to the cocktail that follows. Berentzen's Apfel Liqueur—this apple-flavoured liqueur from Germany is a natural when paired with bourbon whiskey. Bulleit Bourbon—peppery and full-bodied, with a high rye content in the

mash, this premium spirit makes a fine Manhattan. But the holiday recipe that follows comes from New York bartender David Marsden, who has taken his cocktail a step beyond the Manhattan, substituting Berentzen's Apfel for the sweet vermouth. The allspice bitters adds a touch of holiday magic.



Apple Manhattan

Ingredients

- › 60ml Bulleit Bourbon
- › 30ml Berentzen's Apple Liqueur
- › 2 dashes Dale DeGroff's Pimento Bitters

Method

Stir all the ingredients in a mixing glass with ice and strain into a chilled cocktail glass. Garnish with a thin slice of Granny Smith Apple.

OPTIONAL HOLIDAY DECORATION

Make a mixture of superfine sugar and cinnamon and prepare a cocktail glass by frosting the edge with the mixture. Do this well in advance of serving the drink to allow the sugar-cinnamon mixture to crystallise on the rim of the glass. The crystallised flavoured sugar is a nice flavour partner with the drink and allowing it to dry and harden will prevent the sugar from migrating down the glass to the stem and creating a sticky mess. Chill the prepared glass.

Coctel Jerez

Another special product for an equally special cocktail is Emilio Lustau Dry Oloroso Sherry. Emilio Lustau is one of the top sherry producers with production and aging facilities throughout the Sherry Triangle. Dry Oloroso looks at a glance like an oxymoron but this nutty rich flavoured Oloroso sherry is a dry dinner style wine. Oloroso styles generally have some residual sweetness but this one is a fine companion for game fowl dishes or a holiday cheese plate... and of course in our Coctel Jerez (below). The second sherry listed is a late harvest sweet sherry crafted from Pedro Ximenez grapes; often sipped for dessert or in this case used to add a touch of sweetness to this dry cocktail.

Ingredients

- › 45ml Red Breast 12-year-old Irish Whiskey
- › 30ml Emilio Lustau dry Oloroso sherry
- › 8ml Emilio Lustau Pedro Ximenez Sherry
- › Dash Dale DeGroff's Pimento Bitters
- › Flamed orange peel garnish

Method

Stir the first four ingredients well with ice and serve strain into a cocktail glass. Garnish with an orange zest expressing the oil over the top of the drink.



WHISKY-BASED (SCOTLAND)



Luxury Rob Roy

The luxury market for malts in the 15 to 30 year range is so strong that demand is out-pacing supply; good for the distillers but difficult for the consumer since producers can command top dollar for the older malts. Glenfiddich, 18-year-old aged in Oloroso sherry and bourbon casks is the perfect base for a luxury Rob Roy.

Ingredients

- › 60ml Glenfiddich 18-year-old
- › 30ml Italian Sweet Vermouth
- › Dash Dale Degroff Aromatic Bitters

Preparation

Pour all ingredients over ice in a mixing glass and stir as you would a Martini. Strain into a chilled cocktail glass and garnish with an orange zest.



BRANDY-BASED

Millennium Cocktail

Also known as the East India Cocktail.

I was commissioned to create this cocktail with the special Millennium bottling from Courvoisier and it turned out better than I ever expected—but now I guess I need to change the name. The cocktail is too good to be relegated to the trash heap of millennium merchandise. It is one of my best. Since writing these words I have acquired an out of print cocktail book called The Roving Bartender by Bill Kelly (1948), and to my surprise there was a cocktail called the East India Cocktail with brandy, curaçao, pineapple and bitters. I don't know if it was Bill's or if it pre-dates his book, but 1948 is my birth year so all bodes well. My additions of orange oil and nutmeg changed the flavour profile of the drink sufficiently that I feel I have a new drink.

Ingredients

- › 45ml Courvoisier Millennium Cognac
- › 45ml Pineapple juice
- › 30ml Orange Curaçao
- › 1 dash Angostura Bitters

Preparation

1. Shake all ingredients with ice and strain into a chilled martini glass.
2. Garnish with a twist of orange and dust with nutmeg.

RUM-BASED



Planters Punch

Adapted by Dale DeGroff.

Ingredients

- › 30ml Myers's Dark Rum
- › 30ml Appleton Reserve
- › 15ml Fresh lime juice
- › 30ml Fresh orange juice
- › 30ml Pineapple juice
- › 15ml Simple (made as follows:
2 cups Demerara sugar, one cup distilled water)
- › 1 tsp Grenadine
- › 15ml Grand Marnier
- › 1 dash Dale DeGroff Pimento Bitters

Method

1. Shake with 3 ice cubes and strain into an ice tea or zombie glass over crushed ice.
2. Garnish with orange slice and marinated cherry. Serve with straws.



Painkiller

(Variation)

Ingredients

- › 60ml Pusser's Navy Rum
- › 30ml Coco Lopez
- › 120ml Pineapple juice
- › 30ml Orange juice
- › 1 dash Dale DeGroff Pimento Bitters

Method

1. Shake all ingredients well with ice and strain over ice into a tall glass.
2. Garnish by grating fresh nutmeg over the top.



Prestige Cocktail

Created by Dale DeGroff.

Ingredients

- › 30ml Bacardi 8-year-old
- › 8ml Martini & Rossi dry vermouth
- › 8ml Fresh lime juice
- › 22ml Velvet Falernum
- › 30ml Pineapple juice
- › 1 dash Dale DeGroff Pimento Bitters
- › Pineapple wedge and lime zest

Method

1. Shake with ice and strain into a chilled double cocktail glass.
2. Garnish with pineapple wedge and lime peel.



Mojito

Cuban-style with bitters.

Ingredients

- › 50ml White Rum
- › 22ml fresh lime juice
- › 30ml Simple syrup (1 part sugar to 1 part water)
- › 2 dashes Dale DeGroff Pimento Bitters
- › 2 sprigs of mint (use tender, young mint sprigs)

Method

1. Muddle one mint sprig with the Simple syrup and the lime juice in the bottom of a mixing glass.
2. Add the rest of the ingredients and shake with ice.
3. Strain into a highball glass over cracked ice, top with soda and garnish with a sprig of mint.

Dale DeGroff's Pimento Aromatic Bitters

Crafted entirely from whole botanicals, without commercial flavourings or artificial dyes, Dale DeGroff's Pimento Aromatic Bitters is produced in the historic Combiar distillery (Saumur, France) by infusing and distilling a blend of select botanicals. Allspice berries provide the main flavour profile, layered with tropical and Mediterranean spices. This versatile cocktail bitters enhances the flavour of cocktails without overpowering them. In addition, the naturally occurring essential oils of pimento are believed to aid digestion. *For more information go to www.pimentobitters.com*



Double-D Mai Tai

Ingredients

- › 60ml Plantation Rum
- › 22ml Pierre Ferrand Dry Curaçao
- › 22ml Lime juice
- › 8ml Orgeat Syrup
- › 15ml Simple syrup
- › 1 dash Dale DeGroff Pimento Bitters

Method

1. Shake well with ice and strain into a double old-fashioned glass filled with ice.
2. Garnish with mint sprig and a thin wheel of lime.

Double-d Pina Colada

A pina colada variation.

Ingredients

- › 50ml Light Rum
- › 15ml Myers rum
- › 60ml Coco Lopez
- › 30ml Cream
- › 150ml Fresh pineapple juice
- › 1 dash Dale DeGroff Pimento Bitters
- › 1 cup cracked ice



Method

1. Pour all ingredients except garnish into a blender. Add ice. Blend for 15 seconds.
2. Pour into a highball glass and garnish with a pineapple wedge and a maraschino cherry.



Island Breeze

Created by Dale DeGroff.

Ingredients

- › 50ml Light Rum
- › 120ml Pineapple juice
- › 30ml Cranberry Juice

Method

- 1 dash Dale DeGroff Pimento Bitters Build over ice in a highball glass. Garnish with a lime wedge.



Ti' Punch

Ingredients

- › 50ml Good Aged Rum
- › 8ml Velvet Falernum
- › 15ml Simple syrup
- › 22ml Fresh lime juice
- › 1 dash Dale DeGroff Pimento Bitters

Method

1. Shake all ingredients well and strain into iced old-fashioned glass.
2. Garnish with squeeze of lime.

CAMPARI-BASED

Negroni
Sbagliato

The special product in the next recipe is St Germain Elderflower liqueur. This marvellous product is so mixable it has become a staple in bars everywhere, it is hard to find a spirit companion that doesn't like this pleasing floral bouquet of flavour.

Ingredients

- › 45ml Campari
- › 45ml Italian Sweet Vermouth
- › 60ml Prosecco sparkling wine
- › Orange Zest Garnish

Method

Pour the Campari and the sweet vermouth into a cocktail shaker with ice and shake well. Strain into a goblet
¾ filled with ice and top with prosecco. Garnish with an orange slice expressing the oil over the top of the drink.



MEZCAL-BASED

Del Maguey Chichicapa is an idiosyncratic agave spirit and one of the village mezcals crafted in the mountains of Oaxaca, Mexico, and bottled by Ron Cooper Of Del Maguey Spirits.

La Vida Buena

Inspired by the Manhattan with a smoky village Mezcal from Ron Cooper and created by New York Bartender Leo DeGroff.

Ingredients

- › 45ml Vida Del Maguey Single Village 100 percent Espadin Mezcal
- › 22ml Carpano Antica Italian Sweet Vermouth

- › 22ml Aperol Italian bitter orange liqueur
- › 2 dashes Dale DeGroff's Pimento Bitters

Method

Stir ingredients with ice until chilled. Strain over a large hand cut ice cube into a rocks glass. Garnish with an orange zest expressing the oil over the top of the drink.

TEQUILA-BASED



Margarita

Ingredients

- › 445ml Premium tequila
- › 25ml Cointreau
- › 20ml Fresh lime juice
- › Coarse salt (not iodized)
- › Lime wedge

Method

Rim a large cocktail glass by rubbing the outside of the rim with the lime wedge and dipping it into a saucer of coarse salt. Combine remaining ingredients in a cocktail shaker with ice. Shake well and strain into the chilled salted cocktail glass.

Note: for a sweeter drink add 10ml of agave nectar.



CHAMPAGNE-BASED

Champagne is always welcome and is right for any time of day or night and for any occasion. Champagne cocktails are among the most sophisticated and extravagant party libations. I served a champagne cocktail called the Ritz Cocktail with great success for many years at the world famous Rainbow Room, and it was appropriate before or after dinner, holiday or any day!

Ritz Cocktail

This cocktail is a tribute to the champagne-based cocktails of Ritz Hotel bars in Paris and Madrid.

Ingredients

- › 22ml Cognac
- › 15ml Cointreau
- › 8ml Luxardo Maraschino Liqueur
- › 8ml Fresh lemon juice
- › 60ml Champagne

Method

Shake in a mixing glass all ingredients except the champagne, then strain into a chilled cocktail glass and finish with 2oz of champagne. Garnish with an orange zest expressing the oil over the top of the drink.

NOTE: Recipe for six: prepare a pitcher containing the first four ingredients batched for the number of guests. To serve the individual drinks pour 1.75oz of the prepared drink into a shaker ... shake and strain into a cocktail glass and then top with Champagne.

Rosé Champagne and still rosé wines are showing a remarkable uptick in popularity. Billecart-Salmon Brut Rosé would be a welcome gift at any holiday gathering. The Champagne and sparkling wine selections that follow will add a touch of class to a festive hamper.

VODKA-BASED

Grapefruit Julep

One of the best-flavoured vodkas in the vodka-based category is the star of this next recipe, an original of mine that takes some serious liberties with the julep. I concocted it a few years ago after doing some work for both the grapefruit growers of Florida and for POM Wonderful pomegranate juice, both of which are pleasingly tart like cranberry juice. Tart ingredients are excellent for mixing in cocktails. A couple of years after I invented the Grapefruit Julep, Finlandia Grapefruit was released, and I think it may very well be the best of this ilk of flavoured spirits, so that's what's used below.

Ingredients

- > 2 Mint sprigs
- > 15ml Fresh-squeezed lime juice
- > 15ml Honey syrup
- > 15ml Agave syrup
- > 45ml Vodka, preferably Finlandia Grapefruit
- > 45ml Fresh-squeezed grapefruit juice
- > 30ml POM Wonderful pomegranate juice

Method

In the bottom of a mixing glass, bruise one of the mint sprigs and add the lime juice, honey syrup, and agave syrup. Next, add the vodka, grapefruit juice, pomegranate juice, and ice—and shake well. Then strain it into a highball glass filled with crushed ice and stir to frost, as you would a Mint Julep. Garnish with the remaining sprig of mint.



TEQUILA-BASED



Copa Verde

A festive gourmet shooter that makes a perfect companion small bites. The recipe that follows will yield 10 to 12, 45ml shots.

Ingredients

- > 180ml Tequila Ocho Reposado tequila
- > One avocado ripe but not too soft skinned with pit removed
- > 60ml Fresh squeezed lemon juice
- > 60ml Fresh lime juice
- > 120ml Agave nectar
- > 120ml Water

Method

Combine all ingredients in blender and puree and strain into a pitcher.

To Serve

Pour into a mixing glass with ice and shake well; serve in shot glasses. For a spice ascent, frost rim of glass with blend of chilli powder and kosher salt... or just salt.



VODKA-BASED

Bloody Mary

With the exception of the martini, I suspect no other drink inspires as much debate as the Bloody Mary. The discussion often centres on the extent of the spiciness or on the correct garnish, and so this cocktail offers a rich ground for improvisation in both areas. So, you should have fun with this one, and mix whatever pleases you, no matter what anyone else says. What follows is a recipe proven to please many.

Ingredients

- › 120ml Tomato juice
- › 10ml Freshly squeezed lemon juice
- › 3 dashes of Tabasco sauce
- › 2 dashes of Worcestershire sauce
- › Pinch each of freshly ground black pepper and salt
- › Dash of celery salt (optional)
- › Freshly grated horseradish, to taste (optional)
- › Lemon and lime wedge for garnish

Method

In a mixing glass combine the vodka, tomato juice, lemon juice, Tabasco, Worcestershire sauce, salt, pepper, and the optional celery salt and horseradish. Add ice and roll back and forth to mix. Strain into an iced goblet and garnish with the lemon and lime wedges on a sideplate.

TECHNIQUE NOTE

Drinkers may forever debate the inclusion of horseradish, but no one will argue with this: a Bloody Mary should never be shaken hard, or the integrity of the tomato juice is compromised. Shaking makes it foamy, and the juice loses its weight and texture on the tongue, ruining the drink. This is not a martini, and personal preference does not come into play—you roll a Bloody Mary back and forth to combine the ingredients, you do not shake it.





MY FAMILY FAVOURITES

Holidays are special and there are more reasons to look forward to the holidays than there are reasons to stress over them; family traditions especially those that involve food and drink are high on that list. Eggnog for many families is a central holiday tradition and making perfect eggnog is not a difficult chore. When it comes to mixing eggs and alcoholic beverages we are in debt to the old English Possets and even the ancient wassail, but cold eggnog fortified with brandy and rum or whiskey and rum is a distinctively American tradition. The best recipe dates to the middle of the 19th century and it was from these recipes that my great Uncle Angelo took inspiration for his award winning eggnog.

Uncle Angelo's Egg Nog

Angelo Gencarelli's award winning recipe appeared on the Four Roses whiskey bottle for years in the 1950s. What makes it so special is its lightness, two parts milk to one part double cream; the whipped egg whites folded in are like clouds above a sea of nog. One batch, as described below, will serve 6-10 guests.

Ingredients

- > 6 eggs (separated)
- > 1L Milk
- > 0.5L Double cream

- > 1 tbsp. Freshly ground nutmeg
- > 96g Sugar
- > 180ml Bourbon
- > 180ml your favorite medium-bodied aged rum

Method

Put the whites aside in the fridge. Beat the egg yolks well until they turn very light in colour, adding 50g of sugar as you beat. Beat extra well. Add milk, cream and liquor to finished yolks. Stir and chill. Just before serving, beat egg whites with the remaining sugar until they peak. Fold whites into the finished eggnog and serve in cups with fresh grated nutmeg over the top.

General Harrison's Nog

I found the following eggnog recipe in the 'Temperance Drinks' section of *How to Mix Drinks* (1862), by the father of the modern bartending profession Jerry Thomas. A personal favorite of mine, this recipe is adapted from the Jerry recipe. The recipe is a crossover from the colonial syllabub that often included fruit. General Harrison's eggnog is a single-serve drink rather than a bowl drink; remember the 1860s were the formative years of the cocktail category. This was originally a temperance drink, so the bourbon is my addition. Adapted from an original by Dale DeGroff.

Ingredients

- › 45ml Makers Mark Bourbon
- › 120ml Fresh apple cider
- › 1 Egg
- › 1.5tsp sugar
- › Dash of Dale DeGroff's Pimento Bitters™

Method

Assemble the bourbon, cider, egg, and sugar in a cocktail shaker with ice. Shake very well to completely emulsify the egg. Strain over ice into a large goblet and top with the pinch of ground cinnamon.



Tom & Jerry

This is a 19th century winter drink made from batter and served throughout the northeastern United States from the middle of the 19th century until Prohibition. Special crockery bowls and cups were manufactured in numerous designs and are very collectible today. The drink is returning on the wave of interest in classic recipes and can be a worthy addition to a holiday party and one with a great back story. The following recipe will serve 24 guests.

Ingredients

For the batter:

- › 12 Eggs
- › 3tsp Vanilla Extract
- › 60ml Bacardi 8 Rum or your favourite aged rum
- › 4 Dashes Angostura Bitters
- › 4 Cups Sugar
- › 1 tsp Ground Cinnamon

- › ½ tsp Ground Cloves
- › ¾ tsp Ground Allspice
- › ½ tsp Fresh Ground Nutmeg

Method

For batter: separate eggs and place in separate bowls. Beat yolks slightly, add vanilla, rum, bitters, sugar and spices. In the other bowl, beat egg whites until stiff, then fold them into the yolks until it has the consistency of pancake batter. Note: keep refrigerated and use batter the same day.

One serving

- In a coffee mug add
- › 2tbs Batter
- › 30ml Rum
- › 30ml Cognac
- › Fill with boiling milk and stir.
- › Dust with fresh grated nutmeg.