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Drink > The Secret to Better Cocktails Is Your Kitchen

Bartenders have been stealing tricks and tools from chefs for decades. You should be, too. And it's easier than you think

You've got all the right bottles and maybe even have them set up on some rolling copper-and-wood number next to the couch. Thing is, that rig may be emblematic of cocktail-making, but it's totally inadequate. To actually make cocktails, you're going to

use the stove, the fridge, the cutting board, and maybe even the blender. Which is to say: You may keep your bar cart out in the living room, but the work happens in the kitchen. Here's what you need to get the most out of yours.—MARK BYRNE



A Hand-Press Juicer

Make space for a heavy, sculptural beast. Compared with a handheld juicer, it'll save you time (and spare your wrist if you're squeezing for a party). Frieling Cilio Citrus Press; direct.frieling.com, \$178



An Ice-Eating Blender

Your blender's main use: crushing ice. (Secondary: infusions. See recipe.) Look for models with a crush setting, like the Breville Hemisphere Control. brevilleusa.com, \$200



A Serious Saucepan

Simple syrup—one part sugar heated in one part water until dissolved—is crucial, so get a small pan with spouts to avoid spills and heavy enough that the sugar won't scorch. All-Clad ½ Quart Butter Warmer; surlatable.com, \$70



A Strainer That Actually Strains

Every cocktail kit comes with a basic Hawthorn strainer to keep shaken-up ice out of your glass. But to strain out pulp and seeds, you need a much finer mesh. OXO Good Grips 3" Mini Strainer; oxo.com, \$9



A Bigger Jigger

Basic jiggers: perfect for singles. But big-batch drinks call for big-batch amounts. Bonus points to this thing for cocktail-specific measurement marks. Libbey 16 oz. Measuring Glass; libbey.com, \$4

A KNIFE WITH SKILLS

Any paring knife can carve out a wedge of citrus, but only a super-thin blade can shave off just the top layer of peel for twists. *Shun Premier Paring Knife*; shun.katusaltd.com, \$150

All That Gear Makes This Amazing Drink > Basil Gimlet Serves 4

Pour 8 oz. gin into blender, add 2 handfuls fresh basil leaves, and pulse 2 or 3 times. (Try this infusion technique with other herbs and spirits.) Transfer to shaker. Add 3 oz. lemon juice and 3 oz. simple syrup. Fill with ice. Shake well, strain into cocktail glasses. Garnish with basil and twist of lemon.

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