

Cocktail Time with Emily: Shaken or stirred?

BY EMILY O'CONNOR

What's shaking with your home bar? I'm about to stir it up.

With the right tools and technique, anyone (of age) can enjoy their favorite craft cocktail without having to leave the house. Is there a drink you miss from when we were able to go to bars (looking at you, bourbon sour with egg whites)? Learning about shaking versus stirring cocktails is a good first step toward becoming a home craft bartender.

Shaking is about the ice. The number one purpose for incorporating ice is to chill a cocktail — but the reason for choosing to shake versus stir is to control how the ice chills the cocktail.

For instance, stirring a spirit-heavy cocktail like a martini rather than shaking it allows ingredients to chill without becoming overly diluted and cloudy. A lemon drop, which has citrus, simple syrup and alcohol, needs a little more dilution to round out the flavors — so James Bond's shaken martinis are not as cool as you may have thought.

Recipes typically advise one technique or another. A good rule is that if the recipe calls for juice and/or a sweetening syrup, shake it.

When it comes to tools, I prefer a double-tin Boston style shaker because it is light and gets cold. Using a pint glass and tin Boston shaker can be great for beginners because the pint glass allows you to see what is happening. The glass can also double as a stirring vessel. There are tons of shakers to pick from. I recommend avoiding the ill-fitting, common Cobbler shaker.

There are many subtleties to the technique of the proper stir and shake that will make noticeable results in the flavor and quality of your cocktails. When building a stirred cocktail, always add ingredients to an empty stirring glass first, then fill it with ice. Using the spiral handle of a long bar spoon as a guide, gently spin the ice in the glass. This should be relatively silent. Continue stirring like this until you're bored or your arm gets tired.

When shaking, build into your tin, add ice, top with either your other shaker tin or pint glass and shake hard for 20 to 30 seconds or until the tin is frosty and hard to hold. If you fit your top in at an angle, it offers an easy release, popping the small gap above the seam with the heel of your hand. I like to hold the shaker horizontally over my shoulder because it is easier to balance.

When working with egg whites, use



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Rittenhouse Rye whiskey sours with egg whites.

a dry-shake. A dry shake means shaking your liquid ingredients together for about 30 seconds before adding ice and shaking again. Then, double strain using a fine mesh strainer (I recommend Hawthorne strainers). This renders a thick, beautiful foam that makes cocktails smooth and velvety like merengue. If you are worried about yolks or shells, separate your whites into the tin before adding other ingredients.

I recommend beginners put uncooked rice in an empty tin and shake it in different ways, taking note of how the rice moves.

Keep in mind, the most important part of home bartending is enjoying great drinks

with the people you love. Cheers.

Whiskey sour (yields one serving)

Ingredients

- 2 ounces Rittenhouse Rye
- ¾ ounce lemon juice
- ½ ounce agave syrup (equal parts agave and boiling water, chilled)
- One egg white, separated
- Five dashes Angostura Aromatic Bitters

Preparation

Separate an egg white into a shaker tin. Add all ingredients except bitters and shake without ice for 30 seconds.

Add ice and shake for another 30 sec-

onds. Double strain into chilled coupe or old fashioned glass, allowing the foam to set up for at least 10-15 seconds.

Slowly drip bitters over the foam in a pattern. Use the end of a garnish toothpick to swirl the bitters like latte art. Garnish and enjoy,

Emily O'Connor works at the Pickled Fish in Long Beach, Washington.

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