

Fat Tuesday is Upon Us!



Here we are with another excuse to party! Fat Tuesday always means Mardi Gras and New Orleans. So to celebrate, let's take a look at two iconic libations from the Crescent City, the Vieux Carré and the Sazerac.

Vieux Carré

The Vieux Carré dates to 1938 and was the creation of Walter Bergeron, the head bartender at the Monteleone Hotel. This cocktail, which is similar to a Manhattan, combines the spiciness of the rye with the sweet and mellow flavors of the Cognac and vermouth. Add to that the herbal notes of the Benedictine, and you have a smooth and complex drink.



- $\frac{3}{4}$ oz. rye whiskey
 - $\frac{3}{4}$ oz. Cognac
 - $\frac{3}{4}$ oz. sweet vermouth
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ oz. Benedictine
 - dash Peychaud's Bitters
 - dash Angostura Bitters
1. Chill either a cocktail glass or an old fashioned glass with ice and water
 2. Combine all ingredients in a mixing glass and stir with ice
 3. Strain into the chilled cocktail glass and serve up or over fresh ice in chilled Old Fashioned glass
 4. Garnish with thick lemon twist

Sazerac



The Sazerac is, basically, a bitters forward, rye Old Fashioned with an absinthe rinse. The history of this drink is somewhat clouded, but it does originate in New Orleans in the last half of the 19th century. There is also supposed to be a ritual for making the Sazerac. The ritual simply substitutes a second Old Fashioned glass for the mixing glass in the recipe below, (or you could mumble a line from Monty Python as well!)

Whatever ritual you follow this is a cocktail you *need* to try. The flavors are the spices of the rye and bitters combined with the hint of anise and herbs of the absinthe.

- 2 oz. quality rye whiskey such as Sazerac or Templeton Small Batch



- 4 dashes Peychaud's Bitters
- 1 dash Angostura Bitters
- 1 tsp. 2:1 simple syrup
- absinthe
- lemon peel

1. Chill old fashioned glass with ice and water.
2. Combine all ingredients, except absinthe, to a mixing

glass and stir with ice.

3. Drain ice and water from chilled old fashioned glass and rinse with dash of absinthe.
4. Strain drink into chilled, absinthe rinsed old fashioned over fresh ice.
5. Twist lemon peel over drink and discard peel.

Laissez les bons temps roulez!!

Santé!



Later That Night...

Apple Old Fashioned



This cocktail combines spicy Rye with a hint of apple from the bitters. Add to that a touch of smooth honey syrup and you have a drink that is light on the tongue but still bitters forward. You may want to adjust the ratio of bitters to syrup depending on your taste.

Notice that this is essentially a built cocktail. I stir it in a mixing glass without ice to combine the ingredients prior to pouring it over a large ice cube in an un-chilled single old fashioned. Similar to scotch on the rocks. Initially the flavors will be strong with very little dilution. As you sip the cocktail and gently swirl it, the drink will chill and dilute.



- 2 oz. Rye whiskey such as Templeton or Sazarac
- 1 generous dash of Bar Keep Apple Bitters

- 1 barspoon of honey syrup (1 part honey, 1 part water)
 - Lemon peel for garnish
1. Combine the rye, bitters and honey syrup in a mixing glass without ice. Stir to combine.
 2. Pour over a large ice cube in an un-chilled single old fashioned.
 3. Express the oil from the lemon peel and drop it into the drink.

Cheers!

In Search of the Perfectly Balanced Manhattan

This came out of my recent exploration of the venerable Manhattan. The combination of whiskey and vermouth has not been my personal favorite. A few weeks ago, we attended a dinner where the chef paired each course with a specific libation. He included an excellent Manhattan with a small batch bourbon and an Italian Vermouth. Inspired by this, I have determinedly pursued the perfectly balanced Manhattan.

“Well,” one may ask, “what makes any drink ‘perfect’?”

The answer is, of course, the one for whom the drink is made. Recipes for the Manhattan from the turn of the 20th Century, call for vermouth in a much higher ratio than those from the last 20 years. In fact, the vermouth in the Manhattan suffered the same fate as vermouth in the Martini – it practically vanished.



The Manhattan is a simple, yet complex drink. Some time back, I noted Gary Regan's discussion of the Manhattan in his book The Joy of Mixology. He points out that the ratio of whiskey to vermouth varies with the chosen ingredients. Anywhere from 2:1 – 2:1/2 whiskey to vermouth. The stronger the flavors of the whiskey, the more vermouth it can handle. The goal is to construct a cocktail that balances the sweet spice of the base whiskey with the complexity of the vermouth.

With that goal in mind, creating your “perfectly balanced” Manhattan will require premium ingredients and some trial and error. In other words, purchase your favorite bourbon or rye along with a good sweet vermouth and start mixing and tasting! I suggest that you start with a whiskey that you enjoy straight. I also suggest that you spring for a couple of different sweet vermouth's, maybe a French and an Italian.



Our Butler Al
serves a
wonderful
Manhattan!

Start building your drink with a high whiskey:vermouth ratio – say 2:1/2 or even 2:1/4. Chill with ice in a mixing glass and taste from a shot glass. You can then add a little more vermouth as you taste. When your ratio is getting close, start thinking about what bitters you would try and any sweetener the drink might need. To try bitters, taste the bitters on your finger followed by a sip from your shot glass. You can do the same with the sweetener.

When you think you are close, stir up a fresh drink and strain into a cocktail glass. What does your nose tell you? What is the first thing you taste with the first sip? What garnish will enhance these? The classic is a brandied cherry and possibly a citrus peel. Here I used Grand Marnier as the sweetener and brandied cherries for the garnish. I did not think that either orange or lemon oils added much.

For the vermouth I chose Carpano Antica, a sweet Italian. I found this quote concerning Carpano Antica from the Wine Enthusiast dated 2011: “This dark, mysterious vermouth is rich, complex and layered, boasting aromas of mint and other herbs, plums and figs, reminiscent of Madeira. The rich flavors are hard to pin down: cocoa, red wine, almonds, bitter marmalade, hints of spice and toffee all play across the palate, finishing with a bracing bitter edge. This delectable sweet vermouth would shine in a Manhattan.” I think that sums up the Carpano Antica!



So, here are my recipes:



Irish Manhattan

While rye and bourbon are the classics in the Manhattan, I don't see any reason not to try an Irish Whiskey. Specifically the Tullamore Dew 10 year old Single Malt. As I've noted before, the Tullamore Dew has the earthy, grassy flavors of Irish whiskey with the flavors of fruit, (apricot, pineapple, raisin) and wood. Just the depth of flavors that blend with vermouth.

- 1 1/2 oz. Tullamore Dew 10 year old Single Malt Irish



Whiskey

- 3/4 oz. Sweet Italian Vermouth
- 1 dash Grand Marnier (1/8 tsp)
- 1 – 2 dashes Angostura Orange Bitters
- brandied cherries for garnish

1. Chill a cocktail glass with ice and water.
2. Stir to combine all ingredients, sans cherries, in a mixing glass with ice.
3. Strain into chilled cocktail glass and garnish with the cherries

Bourbon Manhattan

For the bourbon Manhattan, I used Russell's Reserve 10 Year Old. This is a bit of a lighter bourbon, but still has the sweet and spicy notes you expect from a quality aged bourbon. Note that in addition to using a higher ratio of vermouth, the recipe includes more Grand Marnier.



- 2 oz. Russell's Reserve 10 Year Old Bourbon
- 1 1/2 oz. Italian Vermouth (sweet)
- 1 tsp Grand Marnier
- 1 – 2 dashes Angostura Orange Bitters

- brandied cherries for garnish

1. Chill a cocktail glass with ice and water.
2. Stir to combine all ingredients, sans cherries, in a mixing glass with ice.
3. Strain into chilled cocktail glass and garnish with the cherries

Rye Manhattan

Sazerac is my rye whiskey of choice. Made at the Buffalo Trace Distillery, it is spicy and sweet with flavors of orange peels, pepper and allspice. It blends very well with the Italian Vermouth. Note that this is the same recipe as the Irish Manhattan, just substituting the Irish Whiskey for the rye.



- 1 1/2 oz. Sazerac Rye Whiskey
- 3/4 oz. Italian Vermouth (sweet)
- 1 dash Grand Marnier (1/8 tsp)
- 1 – 2 dashes Angostura Orange Bitters
- brandied cherries for garnish

1. Chill a cocktail glass with ice and water.
2. Stir to combine all ingredients, sans cherries, in a mixing glass with ice.
3. Strain into chilled cocktail glass and garnish with the cherries

When your guest asks for a Manhattan, he or she is probably expecting a drink that is long on the bourbon or rye and very short on the vermouth. It will be up to you to introduce them to your version of the perfectly balanced Manhattan!

Cheers!

Rye Old Fashioned

- 2 oz Good rye such as Sazerac or Bulleit Small Batch



- 1/2 – 1 tsp Sugar
 - 3-4 dashes Peychaud's Bitters
 - Lemon Zest for garnish
1. Chill an old fashioned glass with ice and water
 2. Combine all ingredients in a mixing glass with ice and stir
 3. Strain into chilled glass over fresh ice.
 4. Express lemon zest over drink and discard (the zest!)
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I'm Not Dead Yet

- 1 1/2 oz Rye Whiskey
- 3/4 oz St. Germain Elderflower Liqueur
- 3/4 oz Aperol
- 1-2 dashes rhubarb bitters

1. Chill an old fashioned glass with ice and water
 2. Add all ingredients to a mixing glass with ice and stir
 3. Strain into chilled glass over fresh ice.
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Vieux Carré

- $\frac{3}{4}$ oz. rye whiskey
- $\frac{3}{4}$ oz. brandy
- $\frac{3}{4}$ oz. sweet vermouth
- $\frac{1}{4}$ oz. Benedictine
- dash Peychaud's Bitters
- dash Angostura Bitters

1. Chill an old fashioned glass with ice and water
 2. Combine all ingredients in a mixing glass and stir with ice
 3. Strain over fresh ice in chilled glass
 4. Garnish with thick lemon twist
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The Manhattan

Sazerac is my rye whiskey of choice. Made at the Buffalo Trace Distillery, it is spicy and sweet with flavors of orange peels, pepper and allspice. It blends very well with the Italian Vermouth. Note that this is the same recipe as the Irish Manhattan, just substituting the Irish Whiskey for the rye.

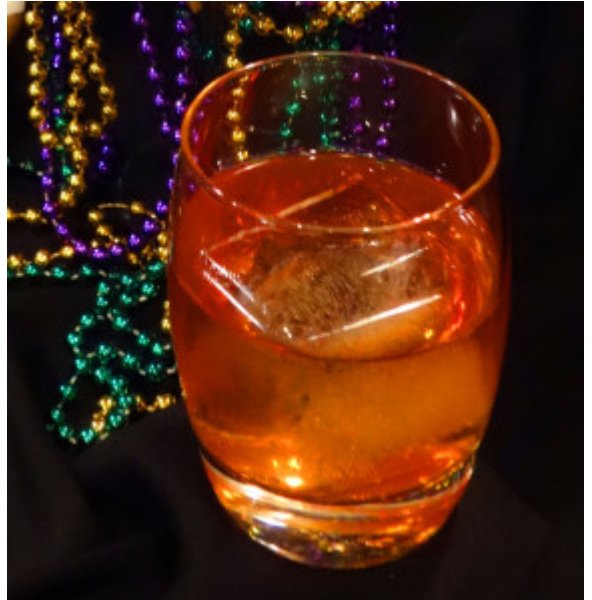


- 1 ½ oz. rye whiskey
- ½ oz. sweet vermouth
- 2 dashes Angostura Bitters

1. Chill a cocktail glass with ice and water
2. Combine all ingredients in a mixing glass and stir with ice
3. Strain into chilled glass
4. Garnish with a cherry

Sazerac

My go to libation while in NOLA!



- 2 oz. rye whiskey
- 4 dashes Peychaud's Bitters
- 1 dash Angostura Bitters
- 1 tsp. 2:1 simple syrup
- absinthe
- lemon peel

1. Chill old fashioned glass with ice and water.
2. Combine all ingredients, except absinthe, to a mixing glass and stir with ice.
3. Drain ice and water from chilled old fashioned glass and rinse with dash of absinthe.
4. Strain drink into chilled, absinthe rinsed old fashioned over fresh ice.

Twist lemon peel over drink and discard peel.

Gary's Redo Classic Manhattan

I don't particularly dislike Manhattans, but vermouth with bourbon or rye have never been my favorite. While I was

playing with Lillet, I thought I'd try it in a Manhattan. Well, here it is:



- 2 ozs. Good aged bourbon such as Basil Hayden
- 1 oz. Lillet Rouge
- 1 dash Regans Orange Bitters
- 1 Dash Fees Brothers' Aromatic Bitters

1. Chill a cocktail glass with ice and water
2. Combine all ingredients in a mixing glass and stir with

I'm Not Dead Yet

The spice in the rye goes well with the herbal elements of the St. Germain and bitterness of the Aperol. You can cut the St. Germain down to 1/4 oz, but you will need to reduce the bitters as well.

- 1 1/2 oz Rye Whiskey
- 3/4 oz St. Germain Elderflower Liqueur
- 3/4 oz Aperol
- 1-2 dashes rhubarb bitters