

Cocktails & Girl Scout Cookies?

It's Girl Scout Cookie season and the little girls, with Mom's in tow, can be found in front of grocery stores and pharmacies across the Nation. The ones I met were very pleased to sell me 2 boxes of each variety. Of course I wasn't purchasing all of those boxes just to fuel a cookie binge. I was interested in a more scholarly pursuit: What cocktail will go with my favorite Girl Scout cookie and which Girl Scout cookie will best pair with my favorite cocktail?



Once home with my boxes, I quickly realized that, with 8 different cookies and hundreds of possible cocktails, this was going to require more than one person's liver! So I assembled a tasting panel. My panel was comprised of foodies and cocktail geeks.



First on the agenda was to taste and rank the cookies. Not surprising, the Samoa was rated highest with 5 stars. Tied for second were the Rah-Rah-Rasins and Thin Mints with 4 stars, followed by Savannah Smiles. The Tagalongs, Do-si-dos and Trefoils rounded out the field.



Pairing the cookies with cocktails came next. The cocktails, listed nearby, were served in the order shown. The panel first rated each cocktail, then tasted the cookies with that drink. The best pairings for that cocktail were then noted. This meant that each cocktail could pair with multiple cookies and

each cookie might go with several cocktails. When all of the cocktails had been served, the panel then went back and selected the best cocktail for each cookie.



The highest rated cocktail was the Irish Coffee followed closely by the Irish and Tequila Manhattans. The Bourbon Manhattan and the St. Hubertus' Fix were also favored. The remaining cocktails rated fairly equally except, on the other end of the spectrum, let's just say this was not a big gin crowd!

Prior to the tasting, I spent some time figuring out what cocktails might work with these cookies. It was immediately evident that fruit, citrus and sour weren't working. I included the Ten Four, Cynar Sour and Rakia Ximenez to see if the panel agreed. While the panel liked these cocktails, they didn't find much to pair them with.



I was a bit surprised by a few of the results. The Tequila Manhattan was a panel favorite, but paired with very little. Except, it was the runaway favorite to pair with the Thin Mint. I expected the Irish Coffee to pair with the Thin Mint, but only one panel member selected that pairing and then not as a favorite. There were some other surprises, but let's get on with the pairings.

The Cocktails

1. Vodka Martini
2. Gin Martini
3. Irish Manhattan
4. Bourbon Manhattan
5. Old Fashioned Tent Revival
6. Tequila Manhattan
7. Barbancourt Old Fashioned
8. Irish Coffee

9. Tequila Old Fashioned
10. Plymouth Old Fashioned
11. St. Hubertus' Fix
12. Ten Four
13. Rakia Ximenez
14. Cynar Sour

The Cookies

- Do-si-dos
- Tagalongs
- Rah-rah-raisins
- Toffee-tastic
- Thin Mints
- Trefoils
- Samoas
- Savannah Smiles

Open the tabs below to see the results:

Martini



I made both the Gin and Vodka Martinis in a mid century style with very little vermouth. As I noted earlier, none of the panel members are gin drinkers. They did, however, like the

Vodka Martini and thought that it paired well with the buttery Trefoil and sugar dusted, lemon of the Savannah Smiles.

Mid Century Vodka Martini

- 1 1/2 oz. Premium Vodka such as Cinco
- Premium Vermouth such as Carpano Dry
- Garnish of your choice

1. Chill a martini glass with ice and water
2. Pour a dash of vermouth into a mixing glass and swirl to coat. Discard the vermouth
3. Add the gin to the mixing glass, fill with ice and stir to chill
4. Strain into chilled martini glass and garnish

Mid Century Gin Martini

To make this, substitute Gin for the Vodka and proceed. I used Ford's. Now, I like gin a lot and regardless of the tasting panel, I thought that the Gin Martini went very well with the Savannah Smiles!

The Manhattan

There were 3 different Manhattans: Irish, Bourbon and Tequila. All were rated highly by the panel and paired well with several of the cookies.

Irish Manhattan

This version of the classic received 4.5 Stars from the panel. They chose it has the hands down favorite to pair with both the chocolate peanut butter Tagalong and the Oatmeal raisin Rah-rah-raisin.



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

The panel paired this classic Manhattan with the Rah-rah-raisin as well but did not think it went as well as the Irish Manhattan. They did, however, pair the Bourbon Manhattan as best cocktail with the coconut caramel Samoa.



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

Tequila Manhattan

This cocktail was rated as the favorite match up with the Thin Mint. As I noted above, I was surprised but have to agree that it pairs very well.



Definitely not a chocolate martini, this is a southwestern makeover of the Manhattan.



- 2 oz. Milagro Añejo Tequila
- 1 oz. Lillet Rouge
- bar spoon (1/8 oz.) of agave nectar
- dash chocolate bitters
- Orange zest

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 wide orange zest

Old Fashioned

I did not include a classic Old Fashioned. Each of the 3 I

did, have some significant variation. The Old Fashioned Tent Revival has agave syrup and is spicy. The Tequila Old Fashioned obviously switches the spirit and uses agave and molé bitters. The Barbancourt Old Fashioned with aged rum was rated as the best pairing for the peanut butter sandwich Do-si-do.

Barbancourt Old Fashioned

The spice of the habanero shrub and the touch of sweetness of the agave complement the dark complex flavors of the aged rum.



- 2 ozs. 15 Year Old Barbancourt Rum
- 1-2 dashes Bitter Truth Habanero Shrub
- 1/8 oz. Agave Nectar

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

Irish Coffee

This was the unanimous favorite of the evening. The panel thought it went with everything except the Savannah Smiles. It tied the Barbancourt Old Fashioned for best with the Do-si-do and the Bourbon Manhattan for paring with the Samoa.

Irish Coffee

I make these with strong coffee, Bushmill's, very little

sweetener and lightly whipped, unsweetened head



- 1 1/2 oz. Bushmill's Irish Whisky
- 1-2 dashes 2:1 simple syrup
- 4-6 oz. very hot dark coffee (I use Starbucks Sumatra Blend)
- 2-3 Tbl. Lightly whipped cream

1. Prepare the coffee
2. Lightly whip a small amount of heavy whipped cream – about 1/4 cup, until it just peaks
3. In an Irish Coffee mug or other mug of choice, add the Whisky, simple syrup and coffee.
4. Stir gently and top with the whipped cream

St. Hubertus Fix

This was a bit of a surprise for me. I wasn't sure what my panel might think of this cocktail. I found this drink at Cool Hunting. Its primary flavor is bitter coffee, but the aged rum and the herbal Jägermeister really balance that bitterness and the spice of the Pimento bitters rounds it all

out.



The panel paired this cocktail as best with the Toffee-tastic. They also thought it went well with the Rah-rah-raisin.

St. Hubertus Fix

- 3/4 oz. Aged Rum – I used Zaya
- 3/4 oz. Jägermeister
- 3 oz strong cold coffee – I used 1:1 cold coffee syrup and water
- 2 dashes of Dale Degroff Pimento Bitters

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

Rakia Ximénez

My tasting panel liked this cocktail and gave it 4 Stars. They did not pair it well with any of the cookies. In retrospect, it might have fared better if I had served it earlier. I'm pretty sure everyone's taste buds were getting saturated. I think that the dry apricot brandy, the sherry and the touch of heat in this cocktail go well with the

Toffee-tastic. But that's just me!



This cocktail combines the fruit flavors of Dorcol's Kinsman Rakia Apricot Brandy with the sweet sherry flavors of Pedro Ximénez. Then the dried chile notes of the Ancho Reyes weigh in. Finally, on the finish, the slightest heat from the Habañero Shrub can be appreciated.



- 1 1/2 oz. Kinsman Rakia Apricot Brandy
- 3/4 oz. Pedro Ximénez Sherry
- 1/4 oz. Ancho Reyes
- 4 Drops Bittermans Habañero Shrub
- Orange peel for garnish

1. Chill a cocktail glass with ice and water
2. Combine all ingredients, except the garnish, in a mixing glass with ice and stir to chill
3. Strain into chilled cocktail glass
4. Express the orange peel over the drink and discard the peel

Well, there you have it. You have a few more days to score some Girl Scout Cookies and try a few pairings for yourself.

Cheers!

