

Cucumber Jalapeño Mule – 3 Ways (or maybe 6 ways!)



Mules, those descendants of the *Moscow Mule* in all their forms, are becoming more and more popular. Why? Because they are a) easy to prepare and b) taste great. What better cocktail to serve your guests than this popular libation? Now, you Moscow Mule aficionados out there can rightly complain that all of these erstwhile concoctions containing ginger beer are not *Mules*. Just like the Martini was

co-opted into many forms, the Mule now has countless varieties. So all I can say is: “Smile, deal with it and serve your guests delicious drinks!”

These Mules are all based on muddled cucumbers and seeded jalapeños. What changes is the fruit juice and the base spirit. I started to call these, “South Texas Mules”, since I used either Ranger Creek’s .36 White Whiskey, or Cinco Vodka which are both distilled here in South Texas. You can use either spirit in any of these cocktails. Each brings its own twist to the party. I found that I preferred the Whiskey with the cranberry and the Vodka with the pomegranate.

Ranger Creek’s .36 White Whiskey is their ‘White Dog,’ or unaged bourbon. It is slightly sweet and a bit grainy with a hint of fruit. It also has the ‘bite’ of white whiskey. Cinco Vodka has a slight aroma of alcohol, but beneath that is a light, pleasant note of grain. The flavors are mostly neutral, with hints of wheat and some vanilla.

The secret to any cocktail is premium ingredients, but:

The Secret to Great Mules



Whether you are making a classic Moscow Mule or some variety, the one thing that will take your cocktail over the top is *fresh ginger*. This will mean that you cannot build the Mule in a glass or mug, but the added zing makes the effort worthwhile. The easiest way to use fresh ginger is to purchase frozen crushed ginger at your supermarket. This generally comes in 1 tsp squares. I cut the frozen square into 4 pieces and use 1 per cocktail. Alternatively, slice a coin of fresh ginger from a ginger root and crush it with your muddler in your shaking tin. You don't even need to peel it first.

You can easily offer all 6 varieties of this Mule at your next party. Pre-slice the cucumber and ginger. Stem the jalapeños and split them down the center lengthwise. They are easy to seed this way. Then just slice them short wise and use 4 pieces to equal 2 slices.

Cucumber Jalapeño Mule

Let's start with lime. This is as close to the classic Moscow Mule as any of these come. I like both the Whiskey and Vodka versions of this. This cocktail is ginger forward with a background freshness from the cucumber. The jalapeño stays

behind the scene enhancing the cucumber.



- 3 – 4 slices of fresh cucumber – I used the English variety
- 2 slices seeded jalapeño
- 1 slice Fresh ginger or 1/4 tsp fresh frozen crushed ginger
- 2 oz. Fresh lime juice
- 2 oz. White Whiskey or Vodka
- 1 oz. 2:1 Simple Syrup (2 parts sugar to 1 part water)
- 6 oz Ginger Beer (I use Goslings or Fever Tree)
- Slice of lime for garnish

1. Muddle cucumber, jalapeño and ginger with the lime juice in your shaker tin
2. Add Spirit of choice and simple syrup.
3. Fill shaker with ice cubes and shake to chill and further muddle: 20-30 seconds
4. Double strain into Copper Mug or chilled Collins glass over fresh ice.
5. Add Ginger Beer and garnish

Cucumber Jalapeño Mule with Cranberry



As noted above, I preferred the Whiskey with this, but the Vodka is good too. The recipe is the same as with the lime juice – just substitute the cranberry juice. I use an organic, unsweetened brand. The cocktail is tart with spicy ginger. The cucumber and cranberry go very well together. I generally serve Mules in the appropriate copper mug, but I wanted to picture this with the color. This will make a great

Holiday cocktail – bright red and fizzy!

- 3 – 4 slices of fresh cucumber – I used the English variety
 - 2 slices seeded jalapeño
 - 1 slice Fresh ginger or 1/4 tsp fresh frozen crushed ginger
 - 2 oz. Unsweetened cranberry juice
 - 2 oz. White Whiskey or Vodka (I preferred the White Whiskey)
 - 1 oz. 2:1 Simple Syrup (2 parts sugar to 1 part water)
 - 6 oz Ginger Beer (I use Goslings or Fever Tree)
1. Muddle cucumber, jalapeño and ginger with the cranberry juice in your shaker tin
 2. Add Spirit of choice and simple syrup.
 3. Fill shaker with ice cubes and shake to chill and further muddle: 20-30 seconds
 4. Double strain into Copper Mug or chilled Collins glass over fresh ice.
 5. Add Ginger Beer

Cucumber Jalapeño Mule with Pomegranate

The pomegranate adds a rich note and is not as tart as either the lime or cranberry varieties above. I used Pom brand which is unsweetened, but is sweeter than some others I've had. The recipe is a bit different because of the sweetness of the Pom. You might need to adjust the pomegranate to simple syrup ratio if you use a different brand.

- 3 – 4 slices of fresh cucumber – I used the English



variety

- 2 slices seeded jalapeño
 - 1 slice Fresh ginger or 1/4 tsp fresh frozen crushed ginger
 - 2 1/2 oz. Unsweetened pomegranate juice
 - 2 oz. White Whiskey or Vodka (I preferred the White Whiskey)
 - 1/2 oz. 2:1 Simple Syrup (2 parts sugar to 1 part water)
 - 6 oz Ginger Beer (I use Goslings or Fever Tree)
1. Muddle cucumber, jalapeño and ginger with the pomegranate juice in your shaker tin
 2. Add Spirit of choice and simple syrup.
 3. Fill shaker with ice cubes and shake to chill and further muddle: 20-30 seconds

4. Double strain into Copper Mug or chilled Collins glass over fresh ice.
5. Add Ginger Beer

So there they are. These will be a simple way to offer multiple varieties of Mules to your guests.

Cheers!

How Dry I AM – MxMo CIX



Mixology Monday

It's Mixology Monday May 2016! This month's theme, hosted by Nick of the Booze Barn, is "Dry." Around here, we like dry, (maybe why we live in South Texas)! The idea this month is to make a cocktail using a dry base spirit with no more than 10% sweetener/juice and 10% fortified wine, or no sweetener and 20% fortified wine. The word "Dry" immediately brought to mind a local distillery here, but I'll come back to that in moment. I'm going to start with an Old Fashioned.

Speaking of preferring dry cocktails, I make Old Fashioneds bitters forward with minimal sweetener. After reading the requirements for this theme, I got to thinking about how often I have difficulty making drinks sweet enough for some people. The classic Old Fashioned is a bit sweet. Most of my Old Fashioned recipes call for 1/4 – 1/2 tsp sweetener such as simple or honey syrup or agave in a 2 ounce pour with 2-3 dashes of bitters. This is less than half of the above

requirements for this theme. So here is one of my favorites, the Apple Old Fashioned:

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, but this month keep it dry!



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
- 1/2 tsp 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.
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Desert Kiss

When I'm thinking of combining a base spirit, especially gin, with a liqueur, I usually go first to the 'Golden Ratio' of 1 1/2 spirit: 3/4 fortified wine: 1/4 liqueur. With the requirements for this month's MxMo, I decided to mess with one of my favorites: Gin, Bianco vermouth and Chartreuse. Reducing both the vermouth and Chartreuse really alters the drink in a very good way. There is London Dry Gin, the unmistakably qualities of the vermouth and the herbal notes of the Chartreuse. Add a little lemon oil and the fragrance of sage and it's all good!



- 1 1/2 oz. London Dry Gin
- 1/4 oz. Carpano Bianco Vermouth
- 1 tsp Chartreuse
- Lemon peel and fresh sage leaf for garnish

1. Chill a cocktail glass with ice and water
2. Combine the gin, vermouth and Chartreuse in a mixing glass with ice and stir to chill
3. Strain into chilled glass
4. Express the lemon peel over the drink and discard
5. Spank the sage leaf in your palms and float it on the drink



Now, back to my comment above that the word “Dry” immediately brought to mind a local distillery here in San Antonio. Dorcol Distillery, located in Southtown has been making an apricot brandy or ‘Rakia.’ The nose on their Kinsman Rakia is,

as you would expect, sweet and fruity just like a brandy should be. But, it is *bone dry*. I even measure the brix and it came in between vodka and London Dry gin. I obviously like their product. Added to that, is my appreciation for what these guys are doing with the community, helping to revitalize an historic part of the City. They have a small bar at their distillery which is quickly becoming a serious attraction. Among the many offerings is a Rakia Martini:

Rakia Martini

This cocktail has the dry fruity apricot flavor of the rakia

which is enhanced by the herbal notes of Lillet



- 2 oz. Kinsman Rakia
- 1/2 oz. Lillet

1. Chill a cocktail glass with ice and water
2. Combine the Rakia and Lillet in a mixing glass with ice and stir to chill
3. Strain into chilled glass
4. Ask your liquor store to order some Kinsman Rakia

Cheers!
