

Getting Started

Now that you have decided what to make, where to put your new bar and have finished the required shopping, you're ready to go. Starting out making craft cocktails at home is not rocket science or a matter of life and death, it's much more important. It is also easy if you keep it simple. So with that, some bullet points in no particular order:

- Find some recipes you like and follow them closely. You can improvise after you're comfortable making them. Places to look include Liquor.com, Small Screen Network, jeffreymorgenthaler.com, beachbumberry.com and many more. Plus there are a vast list of good books.
- Don't be afraid of dilution. When you chill a drink by stirring or shaking, ice will melt and dilute the drink. You actually want this to happen. A good cocktail will have about a 25% dilution when it's first made. After that, the ice melting will water down the drink.
- Use good ice. Clear ice is great but it's hard to make and not necessary upfront. Just use good water to make your ice and be sure it is really frozen. Ice you buy in bags is not cold enough for good cocktails. When you are expecting guests, start collecting ice cubes in gallon freezer bags a few days in advance. Use the bags of ice you buy for keeping the beer cold, and the bagged ice you made and stored in the freezer to make cocktails.
- When you shake a drink – shake it! Don't try to love it to death. When your hand gets cold on the tin, you can stop shaking.
- The same for stirring. You're not at high tea with the queen. Stir like you mean it!
- Measure, don't free pour.
- Unless you're having a number of guests, only use fresh

squeezed juices. If your going to be making cocktails for a crowd, squeeze the juices that morning.