

Bartenders Reveal The 5 Essential American Cocktails Everyone Should Try

By Gabby Romero



PHOTO: LUCY SCHAEFFER; FOOD STYLING: BROOKE CAISON

Some of America's most beloved cocktails got their start thousands of miles away. The gin and [tonic](#) was a sweet and boozy way to combat malaria in British-occupied India. The [piña colada](#) was born at a Hilton hotel in Puerto Rico before becoming the island's national drink. And the classic [spritz](#) came about as a way for soldiers of the Austro-Hungarian empire to dilute Venetian wine.

But many of the world's favorite drinks were born on American soil. From niche sips like the [Last Word](#) to classics like the [Old Fashioned](#), the U.S. has made a major impact on modern cocktail culture.

We asked bartenders to share what they consider to be the quintessential American cocktails. And, in honor of our nation's 250th birthday, ordering one (or a few) of these drinks seems like an appropriate way to celebrate.

Martini

But, over the years, the martini has expanded into a category of its own. Now, it can be made with different base spirits, varying amounts of vermouth, and with a wide range of garnishes and flavorings. Amir Babayoff, Bar Director at [Ophelia](#), notes that the martini is memorable because it combines "simple & strong structure, historical roots & sense of place, strong identity, and the ability to evolve."