



# The Essential Cocktail: The Art of Mixing Perfect Drinks

By Dale DeGroff

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## **The Essential Cocktail: The Art of Mixing Perfect Drinks** By Dale DeGroff

Dale DeGroff is widely regarded as the world's foremost mixologist. Hailed by the *New York Times* as "single-handedly responsible for what's been called the cocktail renaissance," he earned this reputation during his twelve years at the fashionable Promenade Bar in New York City's Rainbow Room. It was there in 1987 that he not only reintroduced the cocktail menu to the country but also began mixing drinks from scratch, using impeccably fresh ingredients instead of the widespread mixes used at the time. Known especially for crafting unique cocktails, reviving classics, and coaxing superior flavor from his ingredients, DeGroff has selected his 100 essential drinks and 100 of their best variations—including many of his signature cocktails—for this premier mixology guide.

*The Essential Cocktail* features only those drinks that stand out for their flavor, interesting formula, or distinctive technique. These are the very ones every amateur and professional bartender must know, the martinis, sours, highballs, tropicals, punches, sweets, and classics, both old and new, that form the core of a connoisseur's repertoire. Throughout the book are DeGroff's personal twists, such as a tangy Grapefruit Julep or a refreshing Yuzu Gimlet.

To complement the tantalizing photographs of each essential cocktail, DeGroff also regales readers with the fascinating lore behind a drink's genesis and instructs us on using the right ingredients, techniques, glasses, and garnishes. As Julia Child's *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* was the classic compendium for home chefs and gourmands, so *The Essential Cocktail* will be the go-to book for serious mixologists and cocktail enthusiasts.

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Degroff (*The Craft of the Cocktail*) likes to be referred to as the King of Cocktails, and it is hard to argue the point. During his stint as bartender at Manhattan's Rainbow Room, he shunned packaged mixes and ushered in the use of fresh ingredients for classic drinks as well as potables of his own device. In this book, he offers 100 popular whistle-wetters and 100 variations thereof—martinis, sours, highballs and punches are all well represented. A Bloody Mary is never shaken, but rather rolled back and forth, while a Bloody Bull adds beef broth to the recipe and can stand up to a vigorous shake. There's the lowly Long Island Iced Tea, mated with a variation called a Full Monte, which calls for Champagne instead of cola. And a basic Daiquiri (rum, simple syrup, lime juice) is out-boxed by Dale's Hemingway Daiquiri, which adds Maraschino liqueur and grapefruit juice to the mix. 150 full-color photos help sweeten the deal, and historical asides provide fine fodder for party chit-chat. The Tequila Sunrise, it turns out, was created south of the border during Prohibition and included fresh lemonade and French cassis. But when the drink traveled north, inexperienced bartenders dumbed it down to today's mix of OJ and grenadine. Where was a cocktail king when we needed one? (Oct.)

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From [Booklist](#)

DeGroff, who with David Wondrich and Eric Felten forms a triumvirate of indispensable drinks writers, can also claim a major role in the start of the still-flourishing cocktail revival. His inspired work behind the Promenade Bar at New York City's Rainbow Room during the 1980s helped create a bulwark against the encroachment of wine coolers and lite beer, and demand for his services as a corporate consultant is a testament to the public's continued thirst for high-test, high-taste concoctions. Far more focused than his 500-recipe *Craft of the Cocktail* (2002), *The Essential Cocktail* is a carefully selected, judiciously blended mix of recipes, instructions, and historical lore, garnished with well-seasoned advice on tactics, techniques, and tools. Oft-consumed classics and overlooked also-rans sit comfortably alongside DeGroff's and others' variations, and cutting-edge innovations like foam supplement rather than supplant tried-and-true preparations. DeGroff is a man to trust with the details both small (Angostura bitters or Peychaud's?) and large (shaken or stirred?). If you're not thirsty after consulting this volume, there's no medicine for what ails you. --Keir Graff

Review

"Dale DeGroff is the Oracle, the Yoda, the Walking Buddha of mixology. Simply put: If you're having an argument about how to make a particular cocktail? Whoever quotes DeGroff wins."

—Anthony Bourdain

"Dale DeGroff is the Grand Master Chef of cocktail making. I've been lucky enough to be his student—now everyone will know his secrets!"

—Bobby Flay

"I am a huge believer that no dining experience is complete without a perfectly mixed cocktail and who better to guide you in its preparation than the King of Cocktails himself. *The Essential Cocktail* has any drink you could ever want, and in Dale DeGroff's capable hands, cocktail perfection is assured."

—Ming Tsai

"Dale DeGroff is without a doubt the ultimate rock-star bartender. He's fueled many of my parties around the world with his extraordinarily well-crafted and elegant cocktails. A true master."

—Colin Cowie

"*The Essential Cocktail* is a handbook for ladies and gentlemen interested in the honorable pursuit of all things delicious. For me that very often starts with a delightful and tasty cocktail crafted by the true master mixologist, Dale DeGroff. With this guide in hand, perfect drinks are no longer difficult alchemy, but easy sipping instead."

—Mario Batali

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