

Chicago Market Presents... Summer Cocktails with Bitter Ex!

We hope you'll join us in making your cocktails alongside Ryan on our Zoom event! In order to do that, you'll want to make sure you have in your pantry the common ingredients listed below, make a quick shopping list for some of the more unique items, and definitely get some of Ryan's bitters in advance.

Bitter Ex Bitters are available at shop.bitterexchicago.com. Delivery in Chicagoland is generally 2 days, so don't wait until the last minute! If you'd like to use alcohol in your drinks, it can be whatever you already have in your home, or visit our friends (and avid Chicago Market supporters) [River Valley Farmers Table](#) in Ravenswood, they have the cutest little store with whatever booze you'll need (and potentially ingredients including Bitter Ex Bitters!). Always recommended is fresh-squeezed juice over a carton, as it makes a world of difference. And, for any bar tools or accessories you might need, check out [Barshop Chicago](#) in Lincoln Park.

Listed below are the ingredients Ryan will be using in his demonstration and also noting which ones you can substitute for depending on your preferences or what you have available. But... if you prefer to just watch and learn, that is totally cool too!

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Ingredients for Cocktail #1: The Black Widow

1oz fresh-squeezed **lime juice**

0.5oz **agave nectar**

4-5 **blackberries** (or comparable amount of other fresh fruit--the sweeter and juicier the better)

2-3 leaves of fresh **basil** (or another fresh herb--think about what may work with your fruit if not blackberries)

8-9 dashes of Bitter Ex **Sour Cherry bitters** and 4-5 dashes of Bitter Ex **Citrus bitters** (or Spicy Celery, Aromatic, Hot Pepper, Charred Cedar & Cloves, Coffee, or Root Beer bitters--think about what would enhance your selected combination of fruits and herbs if you're making a custom "Black Widow")

Lime wedges and pieces of fruit for garnish

If you prefer alcohol: 2oz of white **tequila** (optional vodka or gin)

Note: If you go the alternative ingredient route for a "custom build" of this drink, we'd love to hear what you come up with and what you call it! Some ideas:

- blueberry/sage/cedar&cloves bitters?
- strawberry/thyme/coffee bitters?
- peach/hibiscus/honey/lemon juice/aromatic bitters?
- mango/cilantro/hot pepper bitters?
- raspberry/oregano/grapefruit juice/spicy celery bitters?
- something new and exciting??????

Ingredients for Cocktail #2: The Mint Condition

Note: this cocktail involves use of a shrub (to read “what the heck is a shrub?” please see below!). There’s an element of steeping the shrub batch that requires at least 2 days advance prep. So if you’d like to try that on your own ahead of time, please go for it and then you can build the drink with Ryan! But if you’d rather just follow along, Ryan will show us each step of the shrub-making process and then you can mix up the cocktail on your own another day.

1.5oz **mint shrub** (*see instructions below)

0.5oz fresh-squeezed **lemon juice**

4-5 dashes Bitter Ex [Citrus bitters](#)

Top with 2oz **club soda**

Lemon (wheel) and **mint sprig** for garnish

If you prefer alcohol: 1.5oz **vodka** (or substitute gin or tequila if that’s your preference)

*Mint shrub

2oz fresh **mint leaves**

2 cup **apple cider vinegar**

0.5 cup **champagne vinegar**

1 cup **water**

1 cup **sugar**

2 tsp **honey**

Pinch **salt**

To make the mint shrub (at least 2 days prior, so by July 14th for our Zoom event):

- Bring water, sugar, vinegars, honey, salt, and 1/2 the mint to a boil, stirring occasionally, turn off heat
- Let cool completely, then using rubber spatula transfer everything to sealable container
- Stir in other 1/2 of fresh mint and steep for 2 days in refrigerator
- Strain contents into another container, keeps for 1-2 weeks refrigerated

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Mixology Tools!

Finally, here are some tools and other equipment options you might want to have on hand in making these cocktails with us:

Tools for Cocktail #1: The Black Widow

Shaking tin w/strainer (don’t have these? Check out this set from [Barshop Chicago](#))

Pint glass if shaker doesn’t have a lid

Muddler (you can use a spoon if need be)

Jigger (a tablespoon works)

Handheld tea strainer (optional)

Cocktail glass

Tools for Cocktail #2: The Mint Condition

For cocktail build:

Shaking tin w/strainer (don't have these? Check out this set from [Barshop Chicago](#))

Pint glass if shaker doesn't have a lid

Jigger (a tablespoon works)

Collins glass

For shrub build:

Medium saucepan

Rubber spatula

Sealable containers

Large strainer

What the heck is a shrub?

A shrub is just a drinking vinegar, named from the Arabic word sharāb meaning “to drink.” Historically, in the 15th century, shrubs were made simply with vinegar, a variety of fresh fruit, and molasses; frequently used in conjunction with medicinal cordials. In the 17th century there were fruit and honey vinegars based with rum and some added spices and citrus peels for unique flavor. A ginger-based shrub is called a switchel. Historically, farmers kept a jar of switchel on them to drink and help keep cool in the relentless heat of long days of outdoor work. They would use fresh ginger, vinegar, and honey or molasses mixed together for an instant refreshing beverage. Finally there are squashes. Squashes are essentially simple syrups flavored with fruit and preservatives like citric acid, and also have higher concentrations of sugar to help keep them shelf stable.