

GARNISH YOUR DRINKS

What would a martini be without its signature olive or lemon twist? A great garnish is the crowning glory of a well-made cocktail. Any self-respecting bartender, professional or amateur, will put as much effort into creating fine garnishes as he or she does into creating extraordinary drinks. A garnish should compliment the cocktail in every way—the flavor of the garnish should enhance the taste of the drink and the garnish's appearance should compliment the look of the drink. Using fresh, top-quality ingredients is mandatory.

Fruits

Wheel



Slice



Twist



Spiral



Wedge



Zest



Citrus Wheels, Slices and Wedges

Lemons, limes and oranges can all be cut up into wheels, slices and wedges. A wheel is a round cross section of fruit and a slice is a wheel cut in half. Wheels and slices are generally mounted on the rim of a glass or floated in a drink. A wedge, also called a squeeze, is a thick slice of fruit designed to add flavor to a cocktail. Wedges are usually mounted on the rim of a glass and can be squeezed into a drink before consuming.

Citrus Twists, Spirals and Zest

The peels of citrus fruit offer a number of attractive garnish options. Twists, spirals and zest of lemons, limes and oranges look great and contain essential oils that give cocktails delicious, concentrated citrus flavors. Twists and spirals are created by cutting long strips of peel. Citrus zest is created by removing fine threads of peel from a fruit. Zest is typically added to the surface of a cocktail.

Fruits (continued)



Fruit Flag

Fruit Boat

Fruit Flags and Boats

Fruit flags and boats are flamboyant fruit garnishes. A flag, also called a sail, is a maraschino cherry skewered on top of another piece of fruit, such as a pineapple wedge. Flags are placed on the rim of a glass. A boat is a wheel of a citrus fruit that has been folded in half with a maraschino cherry skewered in the center. A boat is placed across the opening of a glass.



Maraschino Cherries

You cannot successfully tend bar without a plentiful supply of maraschino cherries. These classic garnishes are extremely versatile—they can be skewered on a cocktail stick, dropped into a drink or used as part of a garnish, such as a fruit flag. When used as a garnish, maraschino cherries that have their stems attached are best.



Berries

Fresh field berries, like blueberries, raspberries and strawberries, make colorful and delicious garnishes for many cocktails. Blueberries and raspberries are typically skewered and placed in a cocktail glass. Strawberries can be used whole or cut in half and are usually placed on the rim of a glass.

Other Fresh Fruits

Almost any fresh fruit can be used as a garnish. Fruits provide lots of color and taste great. Popular choices of fruit that can be added to the rim of a glass include pineapple, kiwi, peach and banana. Exotic-looking cross sections of star fruit and elegant skewers of grapes also look stunning in cocktails.

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Vegetables like celery, cucumbers and different types of herbs make great drink garnishes. As is the case with any garnish, it is crucial to use only the freshest and highest-quality vegetables and herbs. When you decide to get creative with your vegetable garnishes, all you have to remember is to match the garnish to the cocktail. For example, if you are mixing a spicy cocktail, try a fiery garnish such as a jalapeno pepper or habanero-stuffed olive.

Vegetables



Fresh Vegetables

Fresh vegetables are great options for garnishing salty, bitter or spicy cocktails. Celery stalks, cucumber slices and cherry tomatoes are all examples of vegetables that can be used creatively as garnishes. For example, a leafy celery stalk is the classic garnish for the Bloody Caesar.



Cocktail Olives and Onions

Olives and onions are popular garnishes. Both olives and onions are most often skewered and served in a cocktail. When a recipe calls for an olive, it usually refers to green olives with pimento stuffing, such as in the Classic Martini. When garnishing with olives or onions, be sure to use odd numbers which are more visually pleasing.



Herbs and Spices

Herbs and spices can be used in numerous ways to garnish your cocktails. These garnishes not only look striking, but often provide a potent punch of flavor. For example, mint is a very popular garnish used in cocktails like the Orange Razz Smoothie. Cinnamon sticks are also popular garnishes because they make good stir sticks and add a distinctive flavor to drinks.

Toppings and Specialty Garnishes



Toppings are the finishing touch, the ingredients that complete a cocktail. Whipped cream and cocoa powder make great toppings for drinks such as the Almond Hot Chocolate. Grated nutmeg adds just a hint of spice in drinks like the Brandy Alexander Martini. Coffee beans can even be used to garnish cocktails like the Espresso Martini.

Rimming Glasses

Some drink recipes call for the rim of a glass to be coated with a powdered garnish. This technique is called rimming. Rimming a glass enhances the flavor of a cocktail with every sip.



Salt and Celery Salt

Both salt and celery salt are popular rim garnishes for cocktails. Salt is famously used as the rimmer for the Lime Margarita. Celery salt, which is a flavorful blend of salt and ground celery seed, packs more of a punch and can be found on the rim of the Bloody Caesar.

White Sugar

White sugar is used to rim the glasses of sweet cocktails such as the Lemon Drop Martini and warmers like the B-52 coffee. While both granulated sugar and superfine sugar are suitable for rimming glasses, superfine sugar is preferred for rimming. Brown sugar can also be used on a rim for its uniquely rich flavor.

Others Rimmers

Just about any powdered, crumbled or granulated ingredient can be used as a rimmer. Cocoa powder is a great rimming option for chocolate drinks like the Classic Chocolate Martini. Even graham cracker crumbs are used to rim the Key Lime Pie Martini for authentic flavor.