



Mixology

Cannabis-Infused Cocktails

Cannabis is a hot topic these days, even if it's not being smoked.

More and more states are legalizing at least some form or concentration of the active chemicals in marijuana, and more and more adults are turning to cannabis-infused drinks.

WHAT'S IN IT?

Cannabis drinks are infused with cannabinoids, such as THC, tetrahydrocannabinol, or CBD, cannabidiol. Marijuana plants contain more than 100 such chemical compounds that interact with chemicals and receptors in the brain, Harvard Health says.

Cannabis varieties that have lower levels of THC, less than 0.3%, are classified as hemp. Those with more than 0.3% THC are classified as cannabis. However, Harvard Health warns that the types and amounts of cannabinoids that different products claim to contain vary and labels may not be accurate. Buyer beware.

CANNABIS DRINKS VS. ALCOHOL

The cannabinoids in beverages are formulated to dissolve in liquid. They're usually more easily and rapidly absorbed into the body, and may take effect more quickly than edibles such as gummies or cookies.

Dr. Staci Gruber, an



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associate professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School directs the Marijuana Investigations for Neuroscientific Discovery Program at McLean Hospital. She says that while people may be more familiar with alcohol's effects on their bodies, they may not know their tolerance for cannabinoids. Go slowly, she says, and be patient when waiting for the drink to take effect before popping open

another.

"You can go from an experience that's reasonably pleasant to one that's not," Dr. Gruber says.

BENEFITS

The Cleveland Clinic says CBD and other cannabinoids may promote calmness and relaxation, potentially helping people manage stress and anxiety. The drinks may also help people sleep better, the

clinic says, and even help with inflammation and pain management. However, more studies are needed to fully understand cannabis' effects on the body and conditions.

RISKS

CBD products aren't well regulated, the Cleveland Clinic warns, and formulas aren't well tested.

"The problem that these CBD products — like waters,

gummies, edibles and oils — none of these are regulated to the extent that we're monitoring their production and supply chain," says Dr. David Strem, a psychiatrist and addiction specialist at the clinic.

Products may be mislabeled, and drinks that say they just contain CBD may also contain THC, leading to failed drug tests or unwanted psychoactive effects.

Chocolate Cocktails Hit Sweet Spot

Rich and sweet chocolate is having a moment behind the bar. Indulge in these decadent drinks the next time you're looking to unwind.

BRANDY ALEXANDER

Makes one drink. Recipe is from Liquor.com.

Ingredients

1 1/2 ounces cognac
1 ounce dark crème de cacao
1 ounce cream
Grated nutmeg for garnish

Directions

1. Add cognac, dark crème de cacao and cream into a shaker with ice. Shake until well chilled.
2. Strain into a chilled cocktail glass or a coupe glass. Garnish with grated nutmeg.

COCOA BLISS

Makes one drink. Recipe is from ABC Fine Wine & Spirits.

Ingredients

Chocolate syrup
2 ounces vodka
5 ounces hot chocolate
Whipped cream
Grated cinnamon
Chocolate chips

Directions

1. Line the inside of a mug with chocolate syrup. Add the vodka and hot chocolate. Stir to combine.
2. Garnish with whipped cream, grated cinnamon and chocolate chips.

CHOCOLATE MARTINI

Makes one drink. Recipe is from Baileys.

Ingredients

2 ounces chocolate Irish cream
1 ounce vodka

1/2 ounce simple syrup

Directions

1. Add all the ingredients to a cocktail shaker.
2. Shake and fine strain into a coupe or martini glass.

RED WINE-SPIKED HOT CHOCOLATE

Makes one drink. Recipe is from Hy-Vee.

Ingredients

3 ounces half and half
3 ounces cabernet sauvignon
1 ounce hot cocoa mix
Pinch of ground cinnamon
Miniature marshmallows, for garnish
Chocolate syrup, for garnish

Directions

1. Pour the half and half and wine into a microwave-safe mug. Stir to combine, then heat for one minute on high.
2. Stir in hot cocoa mix and ground cinnamon. Garnish with marshmallows and syrup.

CHOCOLATE OLD FASHIONED

Makes one drink. Recipe is from Total Wine.

Ingredients

1 1/2 parts chocolate liqueur
2 parts bourbon
Dash of chocolate bitters

Directions

1. Add all ingredients to a mixing glass, add ice and stir until well chilled.
2. Strain into an old-fashioned glass with a large ice cube.

WHITE CHOCOLATE RUSSIAN

Makes one drink. Recipe from Kahlua.



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Ingredients

1 ounce Kahlua or other coffee liqueur
1 ounce vodka
1 ounce double cream
1 ounce espresso
1 handful of white chocolate squares

Directions

1. In a hot water bath, melt the white chocolate with cream.
2. Fill a rocks glass with ice cubes. Add the coffee liqueur, vodka and espresso.
3. Pour melted chocolate mix on top. Stir.

All About Agave

Agave is a genus of plants native to the hot, arid regions of the Americas.

It's a large, spiky plant with succulent leaves edged with sharp spines. The plant does flower, with a tall stem or mast that grows from the center of the plant and bears a large number of short, tubular flowers.

More importantly, agave plants are edible and, in the form of tequila, potable.

HISTORY

Agave was a major food source for the prehistoric indigenous people of the United States. Arizona's Hohokam people cultivated agave, and the Cahuilla and Kiliwa people of Baja California left behind numerous agave roasting pits. Navajo people made a beverage from squeezed, baked fibers and dried or baked the heads. Leaves were boiled, as were the tender stalks and shoots.

AGAVE NECTAR

Agave syrup or nectar is used as a sweetener and is made from the sap of the plant. That's also where we get pulque, mezcal and tequila.

Pulque is an alcoholic beverage made from the fermented sap of the agave plant. It's a traditional drink in central Mexico and has a sour, yeast-like taste. It has been made for at least 2,000 years, with early indigenous people



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restricting its use for certain classes of people in certain conditions, such as festivals.

Mezcal, sometimes also spelled mescal, is a distilled alcoholic beverage made from agave. The word comes from the Nahuatl word *mexcalli*, which means baked agave. The distillation process dates back to the colonial era of

Mexican history, when Filipino sailors and migrants brought the distillation process to the country during galleon trade. The first mention of distilled agave spirits in colonial records comes from a 1619 mention of indigenous people in Sierra de Nayarit distilling *mexcales* from roasted agave leaf bases.

Tequila is made from the blue agave plant and primarily made in the area around the city of Tequila, northwest of Guadalajara in the Mexican state of Jalisco. Mexican laws regulate the production of tequila, and it can only be produced in Jalisco, Guanajuato, Michoacan, Nayarit and Tamaulipas. The liquor originated

as mezcal, but soon took on its own character owing to the plants specific to this region. Don Pedro Sanchez de Tagle, the marquis of Altamira, is credited as the first person to produce the beverage after King Philip II of Spain banned new vineyards in Mexico and other Spanish colonies in 1595.

Coffee Cocktails Take Off

It may seem counterintuitive, but the relaxing effects of alcohol and the perky properties of coffee actually play pretty well together.

Coffee cocktails are having a moment right now. Use these recipes to make your own caffeine-laced libation.

ROMAN HOLIDAY

Makes one drink. Recipe is from Liquor.com.

Ingredients

1 ounce Amaro Meletti
1/4 ounce Campari
1 ounce cold-brew coffee
3/4 ounce pineapple juice
3/4 ounce lime juice
1/4 ounce demerara syrup
Pinch of sea salt

Directions

1. Add all ingredients into a shaker with ice. Shake until well-chilled.
2. Strain into a double rocks glass over crushed ice.

DALGONA COCKTAIL

Makes one drink. Recipe is from Allrecipes.com.

Ingredients

For the dalgona whip:
2 tablespoons white sugar
2 tablespoons instant coffee granules
2 tablespoons boiling water
For the cocktail:
3/4 cup milk, divided

1 cup ice
1 ounce amaretto
1 ounce crème de cacao

Directions

1. Combine sugar and instant

coffee in a bowl. Pour over the boiling water and whip until the mixture is thick and holds its shape. This should take 3-4 minutes.

2. Pour half the milk into an old-fashioned glass.

3. Fill a cocktail shaker with ice and pour in the rest of the milk, amaretto, crème de cacao. Cover and shake vigorously for about 2 minutes or until well chilled. Strain into an old-fashioned glass. Spoon



the dalgona whip on top.

TEQUILA ESPRESSO MARTINI

Makes one drink. Recipe is from Kahlua.

Ingredients

1 ounce Kahlua or other coffee liqueur
1 ounce tequila
1 ounce espresso coffee, cold

Directions

1. Fill a shaker with ice. Add tequila, coffee liqueur and espresso. Shake the ingredients for 15-20 seconds to create a foam.
2. Strain into a chilled martini or cocktail glass.

ICED COFFEE COCKTAILS

Makes one drink. Recipe is from Starbucks.

Ingredients

4 ounces coffee, brewed
1 1/2 ounce flavored vodka
1 tablespoon heavy cream
1/2 cup ice

Directions

Mix coffee and vodka and stir. Add remaining ingredients; pour over ice.

CAFÉ DOLCE

Makes one drink. Recipe is from Total Wine.

Ingredients

2 ounces tiramisu liqueur
1/2 ounce whipped cream vodka
1/2 ounce coffee liqueur

Directions

Combine ingredients in a cocktail shaker filled with ice. Shake until well chilled. Strain over fresh ice in a double old-fashioned glass.

Bourbon vs. Scotch

It's all whiskey, but not all whiskey is bourbon or Scotch.

And, yes, in the U.S. it's usually whiskey, with the 'e,' but in other countries, it may be whisky, without the 'e.' Either way, it's the same umbrella of potent brown liquors. Keep reading to learn more.

WHAT IS BOURBON?

Bourbon, like Scotch, is a type of whiskey. It's made only in the United States and is most commonly associated with the state of Kentucky, where about 95% of bourbon is made. It must be 51% or more corn grain and aged in new, charred American white oak barrels. There's no specification for its aging, but two years is usually the minimum. If it's aged less than four years, it must say so on the label.

Because it's mostly corn, bourbon tends to be sweeter. It can be served neat, with water, over ice or in mixed drinks or cocktails. Historically, it's been used for medicinal purposes as well. WebMD says that while alcohol use can lead to health issues, low or moderate consumption may reduce bodily inflammation. The drink also has high levels of polyphenols, plant-based antioxidants linked with lowering the risk of heart disease.

WHAT IS SCOTCH?

Like bourbon can only



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come from the U.S., Scotch can only come from, you guessed it, Scotland. The first mention of Scotch whisky (no "e," because we're in Scotland) comes from the Exchequer Rolls of Scotland in 1494, when the king gave a friar eight bolls of malt for distilling.

Scotch is a malt whisky or grain whisky, or a blend. It's usually made with a single grain type, such as the

original barley, although rye or other grains may be used. It must be less than 190 proof, greater than 80 proof, and wholly matured in Scotland in oak casks for at least three years. Caramel color may be added, but otherwise, the Scotch must retain the color, aroma and taste of the materials used in production.

Scotch comes in two basic types: Single malt and single grain. Single malt Scotch must

have been distilled at a single distillery using pot still distillation and made from a 100% barley mash. It has not been blended with whisky from other distilleries or grains. Single grain Scotch is distilled at one distillery, but may involve whole grains of other malted or unmalted cereals. It can be distilled in continuous or column stills. The single in the name of single grain Scotch doesn't refer to the

grains but the distillery.

From these two types, blends can be made. Blended malt Scotch means a blend of two or more single malt Scotches from different distilleries. Blended grain Scotch means a blend of two or more single grain Scotches from different distilleries. Blended Scotch means a blend of one or more single match Scotches with one or more single grain Scotches.



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Cocktails With an Herbal Flair

Leafy greens don't belong in just salads anymore. Give your next drink a fresh flair with herbs.

Here are some recipes to put some spring in your sip.

BASIL DAISY

Makes one drink. Recipe is from Mad River Distillers.

Ingredients

2 ounces rum
1/2 ounce Aperol
1 ounce simple syrup
1 ounce lemon juice
4 basil leaves
Lemon wedge, for garnish

Directions

1. Add all ingredients except the lemon wedge into a shaker with ice. Shake for about 15 seconds.

2. Strain into a glass with fresh ice. Top with a lemon wedge and fresh basil leaves.

HERB GARDENER

Makes one drink. Recipe is from Patron Tequila.

Ingredients

1 1/2 ounces silver tequila
3/4 ounce fresh lime juice
3/4 ounce simple syrup
2 dashes aromatic bitters
Sprigs of sage, rosemary, cilantro and mint
Lime peel and fresh herbs for garnish

Directions

1. Muddle the sage, rosemary, cilantro, mint and lime peel in a cocktail shaker.
2. Add simple syrup, lime juice, bitters and tequila. Shake and strain into a highball glass.
3. Garnish with fresh herbs.

SAGE OLD FASHIONED

Makes one drink. Recipe is from The Glenlivet.

Ingredients

0.88 ounces Scotch
2 dashes Angostura bitters
1 bar spoon of honey

Directions

Add the ingredients to a glass with ice and stir. Garnish with a lemon twist and sage leaves.

CLOVER FIZZ

Makes one drink. Recipe is from Total Wine.

Ingredients

8 fresh mint leaves
Splash of lime juice
1/2 ounce simple syrup
2 ounces Irish whisky
Crushed ice
Sparkling wine or ginger ale
Extra mint leaves and a lime wedge, for garnish

Directions

1. Place mint leaves, lime juice and simple

syrup in a cocktail shaker and gently muddle.

2. Pour whisky into the shaker and top with ice. Cover and shake vigorously.

3. Strain into a rocks glass and add crushed ice. Top with sparkling wine or ginger ale.

4. Garnish with mint leaves and a lime wedge.

ELDERFLOWER SOUR

Makes one drink. Recipe is from Empress Gin.

Ingredients

2 ounces elderflower rose gin
3/4 ounce fresh lemon juice
3/4 ounce simple syrup
1 ounce egg white or aqua faba
Rose petals, for garnish

Directions

1. Add all ingredients to a shaker with ice. Shake and strain. Shake again without the ice.

2. Fine strain into a chilled coupe glass. Garnish with rose petals.

Punch Recipes for a Crowd

A party is not a party without a punch.

Whip out your biggest punch bowl and give one of these crowd-pleasing, boozy punches a try at your next get-together.

CRANBERRY SANGRIA PUNCH

Serves 10. Recipe is from Southern Living.

Ingredients

- 2 cups fresh or frozen cranberries
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup water
- 1 750-milliliter bottle sangria, chilled
- 1/4 cup Campari
- 1 large navel orange, thinly sliced
- 1 large Granny Smith apple, thinly sliced
- 1 750-milliliter bottle brut Champagne, chilled

Directions

1. Boil cranberries, sugar and water in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat, stirring often, until sugar dissolves and berries begin to pop. Remove from heat and cool for 30 minutes.
2. Stir together sangria, Campari and cooled cranberries with sangria and water in a pitcher or punch bowl. Add orange and apple slices.
3. Just before serving, add Champagne. Serve over ice.

OCEAN BREEZE PUNCH

Recipe is from Smirnoff Vodka.

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 pints vodka
- 1 1/2 pints blue curacao



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- 2 pints lemonade
- Lemon wheels

Directions

Combine vodka, blue curacao and lemonade into a large bowl filled with ice. Stir well and garnish with lemon wheels.

USS RICHMOND PUNCH

Serves about 20. Recipe is from Liquor.com and cocktail historian David Wondrich.

Ingredients

- 6 lemons
- 1 1/2 cups superfine sugar
- 2 cups strong brewed black tea, 2 tea bags brewed in 16 ounces water
- 2 cups dark rum
- 2 cups V.S. or V.S.O.P.-grade cognac
- 2 cups ruby port
- 4 ounces Grand Mariner
- 2 750-milliliter bottles of club soda or Champagne
- 20 lemon slices

Grated nutmeg

Directions

1. Place a 2- or 3-quart bowl of water in the freezer overnight.
2. Peel 6 lemons with a swivel-bladed vegetable peeler, trying not to get any of the white pith.
3. In a bowl, muddle the peels with 1 1/2 cups superfine sugar and let it stand for an hour for the lemon oil to leach out.
4. Juice the peeled lemons and

add the juice to the sugar mixture, along with the tea.

5. Strain out the peels and pour into a one-gallon container. Add the rum, cognac, port and Grand Mariner. Refrigerate for at least an hour and up to a few nights.

6. To serve, unmold the block of ice into a two-gallon punch bowl. Add the chilled punch stock and top off with club soda or Champagne. Garnish with grated nutmeg and lemon slices.