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Chic drinks for today's hip

A quick guide to today's most popular cocktails

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SAN FRANCISCO (CBS.MW) - Remember Sex on the Beach? Forget it. What you really want is a Pink Squirrel.

No, it's not a Cinemax special. Catchy, or at least provocative, names are a hallmark of trendy cocktails today just as much as they were decades ago. But drink fads change at the drop of a miniature umbrella and you don't want to be caught ordering something that's just so five minutes ago.

"We're like an ice cream shop these days -- 31 flavors," said Bob McCambridge, a 33-year veteran of the San Francisco bartending scene and currently pouring drinks at Moose's in the North Beach neighborhood.

"It used to be simple stuff like scotch and water," he added. "Now, 99 percent of what these young folks order changes every day."

In the '20s, it was all about moonshine and fruity mixes designed to hoodwink the prohibitionists. After that, Manhattans and martinis were all the rage.

Fast-forward through the free-love, cocktails-are-for-grandma years, and a resurgence has brought back many of the classics while making way for some worthy newcomers.

The following is a list of a few of the more popular mixed booze choices imbibers have been quaffing of late:

Martini

When it comes to the martini, the old adage applies: The more things change, the more they stay the same.

The quintessential not-for-neophytes' drink, however, has strayed from the straight up vodka and gin versions, gradually morphing into a blank canvas on which "mixologists" have painted a variety of elixirs.

"The flavored martini is still really hot and some of the popular flavors in bars around town now are the lichee and mojito martini," said Dale DeGroff, noted New York City bartender and author of "The Craft of the Cocktail."

Other martini creations include:

- *The appletini* -- [Cocktail.com](#) named this fusion its "mixed drink of the month." The recipe is simple: A shot of vodka and a half shot of apple schnapps served with a raisin. In a chilled martini glass, of course. The green apple martini is a slight variation.
- *The chocotini* - James Bond would probably shoot you with his bowtie if you served him one of these, but

nevertheless, this has become a hot choice for the martini rookie with a sweet tooth for chocolate.

- *The dirty martini* - Prepare the gin or vodka classic with plenty of olive juice. Serve it with an extra olive or two - try almond or garlic stuffed olives. A personal favorite.

Mojito

If Fidel Castro were to attend the Kentucky Derby, he'd certainly forego the traditional mint julep in favor of a mojito. And with the growing popularity of these bubbly, Cuban delights, the cigar-sucking dictator wouldn't be alone. "Mojitos are still huge around the country, and bartenders are doing flavor variations like the berry or the vanilla mojito," said DeGross.

This refreshing amalgam consists of rum, mint and lime.

Cosmopolitan

The cosmo isn't quite the "it" drink it was a few years ago when the "Sex and the City" vixens knocked back a few while boning up on raunchy gossip at some trendy Manhattan nightclub. Still, it remains a very popular choice, primarily among women. The basic recipe consists of vodka, lime, cranberry juice and Triple Sec. For a variation with a saucy moniker, try a Rude Cosmo, which substitutes vodka with tequila and some Grand Marnier.

Tequila, straight-up

This south-of-the-border favorite is no longer the get-drunk, do-something-stupid, projectile-hurl bebida of choice. Tequila interest has grown in recent years as premium brands have entered mainstream trendiness. Stepping out from behind the intense flavors of the margarita, Mexico's finest contribution has become a stand-alone drink to be savored.

"People finally realized Cuervo Gold, which had pretty much cornered the entire market, was crap," said McCambridge. "Now everybody has their own personal favorite brands."

Instead of wincing down a shot of some cheap mixto (less than 100 percent pure agave), try sipping a reposado or anejo, two high-end varieties of aged tequila.

Enthusiasts point to brands like Don Julio, Porfidio and Patron.

Champagne cocktail

Rule of thumb: Don't dare jump in the stretch Hummer for a night on the town without a bottle or two of Cristal. But don't fret if you haven't enough bling to afford the trendy champagne. Try enhancing one of the more affordable sparkling wines -- particularly now, the perfect time of year for cork-popping mixers.

"Champagne-based beverages are always a favorite closer to New Year's," said Kari Haugeto, otherwise known as Miss Cocktail on Cocktail.com

Not just your geriatric aunt's drink anymore, the champagne cocktail has enjoyed a renaissance of sorts among the hip crowd. The no-frills recipe in its most basic form includes champagne, a sugar cube, and Angostura bitters.

More potential favorites



Pink Squirrel

From the staples of the trendy bar scene, we move to the slightly more obscure cocktails that have been making a splash of late:

- *The Pisco Sour* -- There's certainly a trend toward southern hemisphere cocktails, according to DeGross, who lauded this tart Peruvian concoction. The main ingredients include Pisco, a brandy made from the Muscat grape, lemon, egg whites and Angostura bitters. A mainstay in Peru and Chile, this drink has begun to make a splash recently in the States.
- *Caipirinha* - In keeping with the southerly flavors, this Brazilian specialty is a cousin of the mojito, consisting of a sugar-cane rum called cachaca (or substitute a light rum), lime, crushed ice and sugar. The caipirinha hasn't caught the eye of bar hoppers to the degree of some of the aforementioned drinks, but it just might if the trend DeGross mentioned continues.
- *The Swimming Pool* - "We get a lot of requests for colorful cocktails, mostly greens and blues," said Miss Cocktail. She mentioned this drink, in particular, as one that seems to be "spilling over from Europe." Described as "a pina colada with blue Curacao," the Swimming Pool "is 'in' because of its intense blue color."

- *The Pink Squirrel* - [BarTV.com](#) put this creamy libation on its Top 10 cocktail list, recommending it for those "hot, summer nights." The recipe includes crème de cacao, crème de noyaux, and heavy cream shaken with crushed ice and served in a frosty cocktail glass.

Cheers!

Shawn Langlois is a reporter for CBS.MarketWatch.com, and the editor of its community message boards.

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