

The Mojito.

By George Sinclair

People who make Mojitos are forever using phrases such as "traditional recipe", "classic recipe", and whatever weasel word comes to hand at that particular moment. I see no shame in proclaiming ones own interpretation of a classic recipe as being the best, this is a subjective term after all; For every one person you find who likes a drink a particular way, you will find another who thinks the opposite. Thats just how things are.

Historically the Mojito seems to have popped up in Cuba during the late 1920s; Quite how is not known; Was it a native concoction? or was it a re-interpretation of a Mint Julep, created by American bartenders fleeing to Cuba from the «evils» of prohibition (1920-1933).

The earliest citation/ recipe for the Mojito is from 1931, and the drink was entitled the "Cuban Mojo"; With "Mojo" meaning soul, and "Mojito" meaning "Little Soul".

"Cuban Cookery, including Cuban Drinks", by De Baralt (Blanche Z.), 1931

RUM COCKTAIL (Cuban mojo)

In medium size glass put :

- * One teaspoonful sugar
- * Juice and rind of a green lime
- * Sprig of mint
- * One jigger Bacardi Rum
- * Several pieces of ice
- * Fill glass with soda water.
- * Serve with a long spoon.

The next mention of a Mojito recipe in a published book is from **1947**, **"Bartender's Guide"**, by **Trader Vic**.

- *1/2 lime
- *3 sprigs mint
- *1 tsp. bar sugar
- *2 oz. Puerto Rico rum

Squeeze lime and drop shell in 10 oz. glass; add sugar to juice and mint leaves and muddle. Fill glass with shaved ice; pour rum over ice; stir or swizzle until glass frosts. Add dash of charged water; garnish with mint and serve with

straws.

Trader Vic was renowned for travelling to the global destination synonymous with a particular cocktail, and then hunting down the authentic recipe. During the 1937 World Fair in Oakland, Trader Vic ran an advert in the local newspaper for his restaurant, in which was listed a Mojito from Habana, Cuba.

Crushed ice or Cubed Ice.

To be honest, this is up to the individuals taste and what they like. He who pays the piper, names the tune.

What I notice when making a Mojito with cubed ice, which also means that the drink will contain a larger amount of soda than the other recipes, is that the mint leaves will raise to the top of the glass. If you are going for a cubed ice Mojito then you may have to leave the Mint on the stem, so that it holds in place, rather than raising to the top. With crushed ice you do not have to worry, as the finer ice acts as a filter block the mints ascent to the top of the glass.

While the Mojito, in some cases, when made with ice cubes, does resemble a Rum Collins (with mint); It is more than likely that escaping US bartenders brought the Mint Julep to the island of Cuba, and remade it with local produce. Remember: Brandy and Rum were the most common ingredients in a Mint Julep before the late 1800s. As I believe that the Mojito is a Cuban Mint Julep, I would have to say that crushed ice is most likely as the original ice used.

And if you are wondering if these Rum Juleps had lemon, or lime, juice in them; Well, there are recipes for Mint Juleps with citrus in them, so it is possible; Though no specific Mojito-esque Julep exists (as far as I know).

Brown Sugar in a Mojito?

Hell no. This ridiculous notion seems to arise from the assumption that all Cubans are poor, and all poor people use brown sugar, as it is presumed to be the cheapest available. Wrong. Wrong. Wrong. Refined sugar is what people use in the Mojito, same as with the Caipirinha. Brown Sugar is not more authentic, and it is certainly not rustic in anyway. However, if you wish to use brown sugar because you, personally, like the taste of it then go ahead; Just don't try to pass it off as 100% Cuban.

Bitters in a Mojito?

Although some Cubans do add a dash, or two, of bitters to the top of their finished Mojitos, it is not a common practice and so should not be seen as THE way to make a Cuban Mojito. Once again, if you like your Mojito with bitters, then go ahead, but please don't tell people that the authentic Cuban Mojito has bitters in it; It doesn't.

Muddled pieces of lime fruit?

No. This is a Mojito, not a Caipirinha. All you need is the juice of the citrus fruit, whether that is lime or lemon, or even both.

When I first started making Mojitos, in 1998, I was told that a Mojito was just a Caipirinha, but made with Bacardi, instead of Cachaca, and just throw in some mint. Thankfully times have changed.

Fernando Campoamor

This is the guy who got Ernest Hemingway to sign the famous "My Mojito in La Bodeguita, my Daiquiri in Lar Floridita" sign; Campoamor is also the man who started the "The Mojito is descended from the Draque" malarkey. The Draque was apparently a brandy based mint drink, but which has no citations, as far as I can tell.

Check out what Wayne Curtis has to say about Campoamor and the signing of the sign, by Hemingway (while Ernest was drunk no less):

<http://republicofrum.blogspot.com/search?q=mojito>

Video Corner

The wonders of the internet allow people from around the world to not only communicate their words/ recipes to each other, but they can also show exactly what they are talking about. Sometimes words fail us, or we do not articulate our point precisely enough. And, of course, not all people speak English as a first language (no, it is true!-). I have therefore decided to do a little round up of Mojito making Videos, mostly using Youtube.com

Brilliant Cocktails: Mojito.

<http://www.youtube.com/v/EJC-zqxYOuo>

Chris Doig makes a much laboured over Mojito, completely London style. I like

that. The London style Mojito is more about the citrus, rather than the mint.

Check out Chris' cocktail podcast on <http://www.brilliantcocktails.com>

Here is the Mojito recipe that I used while working at Match, with Dick Bradsell:

- *50ml Havana Club 3 years old Rum,
- *15ml Fresh Lime Juice,
- *10ml Fresh Lemon Juice,
- *15ml Sugar Syrup,
- *6-8 Mint Leaves (lightly muddled in the bottom of the glass)

Build over crushed ice, and then churn the iced mixture with a bar-spoon (as vigorously as you can); Garnish with a lemon slice, lime wedge, and a fine looking sprig of Mint.

Bacardi Mojito.

Although it troubles me deeply to even mention Bacardi "rum", I must give kudos to this excellent video they made for the Mojito. Bacardi seem to have produced a few different Mojito instructional videos, all with different recipes (though this probably stems from the adverts being produced for different countries). This is the more authentic recipe, without the muddled limes (its a Mojito, not a minted Caipirinha!!!)

<http://www.youtube.com/v/ThfYigFC-SU>

My Mojito Video.

<http://www.youtube.com/v/VH6l8tPiKW0>

Well I couldn't write about other peoples Mojito videos without mentioning my own, now could I?

The author, George Sinclair, operates the thinkingbartender.com website, and blog.

Also, check out his youtube channel: www.youtube.com/thinkingbartender