

Title:

Eessential Bar Equipment

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Summary:

You really do not have to be a professional bartender to be able to mix original drinks, providing you use the appropriate tools for the job. You will certainly find some of the utensils listed below already in your home,

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Article Body:

You really do not have to be a professional bartender to be able to mix original drinks, providing you use the appropriate tools for the job. You will certainly find some of the utensils listed below already in your home, and you can always improvise with everyday kitchen gadgets. If, however, you go shopping to stock up on bar equipment, the important feature to remember is that the utensils should be easy to clean, which is why stainless-steel items and glass are particularly suitable.

A cocktail shaker is an absolute must for your home bar. It is primarily used to mix drinks with ingredients that are difficult to combine smoothly, such as egg yolks, liqueurs, fruit juices, and cream. Any good bar-supply store will stock a variety of shakers and you are certain to find one to fit your budget and needs.

One standard version is a three-part shaker, which consists of a beaker, a lid, and a built-in strainer, to hold back pieces of ice and fruit pits or seeds when pouring the cocktail. Its disadvantage is that the strainer is very difficult to clean and the liquid pours out slowly. The two-part Boston shaker consists of a large stainless-steel beaker and a smaller one made of lead crystal, which fits inside and has the advantage that the glass beaker is also suitable for use as a mixing glass.

I find professionals usually favor a two-part stainless-steel or silver shaker because it is easier to close than the Boston shaker. When you use a two-part shaker or a mixing glass, you will need a round, stainless-steel bar strainer. This features an edge like a coiled spring, and it should fit exactly into the top of the shaker or mixing glass, making it indispensable when straining

cocktails so ice and pieces of fruit or pits do not fall into the glass. If necessary, you can use a new tea strainer instead.

You will also need a mixing glass, sometimes called a shaker glass, for every drink which is stirred, not shaken, such as clear drinks and those made from easily blended ingredients. When shopping for a mixing glass, look for one with a capacity of about 1 quart (enough for 3 or 4 drinks). A long-handled bar spoon is a versatile tool used by bartenders to stir the ingredients in the mixing glass, as a measuring spoon to add the correct amount of ingredients to many cocktails, and to crush flavoring ingredients.

Most bar-spoon handles are 10 inches long and made of stainless steel or silver. At the top of the handle there is usually a disc called a muddler used to "muddle," or crush, pieces of I (mil, herbs, or sugar cubes. The spoon on the opposite end holds 1/6 ounces of liquid, or the same amount as a standard kitchen teaspoon. The rounded back of the spoon is also useful for slowly pouring layers of liqueurs into a glass when you do not want the layers to mix. A bar whisk is also useful for whisking and mixing.

A truly indispensable item for your bar is a double-ended bar measure, because exact quantities of ingredients are needed for making a drink. Also called a pony-jigger measure, these are usually made of stainless steel with a 1-ounce cup at one end, called a pony and a 1+1/2- to 2-ounce measure at the other end, called a jigger. When you go shopping, look for a measure with easy-to-read 1/4-ounce and 1/2 mince markings inside the jigger end. Alternatively, you can use a standard shot glass with markings on it. If you do not have either measure, use a standard set of kitchen measuring spoons—3 teaspoons, or 1 tablespoon, equal 1/2 ounce, 4 teaspoons equal 3/4 ounce and 2 tablespoons equal 1 ounce.