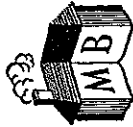


*Hors D'Oeuvre
and Canapés*

WITH A KEY
TO THE COCKTAIL PARTY

By James Beard



NEW YORK

M. Barrons and Company
INCORPORATED

C. 1940



The Key to the Cocktail Party

L'origine du mot cocktail est incertaine. Vraisemblablement anglo-américaine, elle signifie "queue de coq," soit à cause du chatouement des mélanges de liqueurs colorées, soit, selon certaines étymologies, parce que le cocktail primitif des pionniers de Manhattan consistait . . . en plumes de coq trempées dans une décoction de piment dont ils se chatouillaient le gosier, pour les inciter à boire.—Prosper Montagné, Larousse Gastronomique.

The cocktail party no longer means a bottle of gin, a can of sardines and a package of potato chips from the corner grocery.

It has become a definite part of the entertainment schedule for every household, large and small. To the one-room apartment dweller, it is the solution for extending hospitality in the limits of his domain; and to the owner of the great house, it is the fat check for paying old social debts. It is an institution, and a gay one; one that brings forth the best, and sometimes the worst, in all of us. I look upon it as the Twentieth Century salon.

Whether there are three or four guests casually asked to drop in on their way home from work, or three hundred who answer the bidding of an elaborately engraved card, the rules are the same. The major ones are: a hospitable, and to say the least, fairly sober host; good liquor and well mixed, nay, perfectly mixed drinks; food good looking enough to start the flow of the gastric juices and delicious enough to continue it.

Trusting this will not sound like an etiquette book, I shall lay down not only a series of "Do's" but also a series of "Don't's," for this function. Here they are:

DON'T invite more people than your living room will hold, and don't keep adding to the list, one here and there. If your place is small, give a series of parties and make out a list for each and adhere to it. It is disastrous to prepare for ten, have thirty arrive and remember your folly too late.

If you are fond of your friends, don't make guinea pigs out of them. The time to try out new drinks is when you are alone or with some kind and understanding friend who is not afraid to spit it out if it is foul; with thirty or forty people in the room guests are obliged by convention to take at least one swallow.

Unless you have a completely equipped bar, don't try to serve more than two types of cocktails with, perhaps, a wine and a soft drink at any one party. And above all, don't try to force liquor on your guests. Many people, because of physical

disability or personal taste, cannot touch alcohol, but want to come to your party for yourself. Give such guests some sort of appetizing potion, prepared with as much care and love as the cocktail. (I list these later.)

DON'T be the type of host who has to be put to bed by the guests. *You* are doing the entertaining, and you are there to see that your guests have a good time. Unless you have an unheard-of capacity you will find it difficult to have a drink with everyone and still be charming and thoughtful to the late arrivals. There is plenty of time after the crush is over to catch up with the hangers on, and there are always plenty of them—I am usually one myself.

DON'T forget that the food at this party is as important as the drinks. And don't forget, if there is something tucked away somewhere to sup on after the party, it will appeal to you and to your friends who simply will not go. (More on this later, too.) Don't be too lavish and don't be too mean. If you shoot the works for the five o'clock guests and starve the seven o'clock arrivals, you have failed miserably as a host.

DON'T forget, the cocktail party is a festive event; make your house feel it. Flowers and light and warmth of welcome are as important as food and drink.

DO know how many are coming and do know that they are congenial. Remember the Montagues and the Capulets and judge accordingly.

DO have *plenty* of food and drink, for one complements the other and both make for good fellowship and pleasant living. If you are not a cook, or your cook balks at appetizers, remember that there are sources in practically every city where party food, from the simplest to the most elaborate type, may be procured, usually, today, at reasonable rates. In New York and San Francisco (I know from personal experience), and other

large cities as well, eye-filling and stomach-teasing morsels are sent to you attractively arranged on a tray for as little or even less than the same things could be prepared at home.

DO remember to see that the guests are well cared for. One cannot be a good host and be mixing drinks, washing glasses, replenishing trays and talking to guests all at the same time. It is not "swank" to have ample service; it is the secret of relaxed and casual entertaining. Excellent men and women who go about serving such parties are available nowadays in any city or town, and some of them are marvels at making appetizers and mixing, as well as looking like a well-trained servant when the party is on; but always be sure they can mix, else in that lack lies your downfall. And incidentally, don't forget that these itinerant retainers are specialists in their line and deserve great consideration and pleasant treatment. A good job deserves a bonus. The charming neighborliness of America often permits the loan of Susie or Bertha or William for the afternoon.

DO plan ahead so that from the minute the first guest arrives till the last one leaves there is a spirit of relaxed gaiety which infects everyone who enters your door. The cocktail party is not a formal affair; it is as democratic as the subway and its informality should be the keynote.

DO remember these things and plan accordingly: that one should plan on at least two sorts of cocktails, plus a cocktail sherry or Madeira, and a soft drink; and have sufficient quantities—none of it can spoil. The standard cocktails are best: Martinis, Manhattans, Old Fashioneds, Daiquiris, Bronxes. Of course in summer and at the holiday season you may want to serve some sort of flowing bowl which is a specialty of the house, but stay away from the other weird concoctions which may appeal to you, but are poison to Cousin Bill.

Never serve the champagne cocktail—that horror! Good

vintage champagne is a treat in itself and should never be ruined by the addition of bitters and sugar and fruit salad. Champagne punches are another story; but if you have good champagne, and who would serve anything else to his guests, serve it well cooled and in its virgin state!

For the simple party, it is enough to have one cocktail, a Martini for instance, and perhaps a Scotch-and-soda and a sherry if anyone wants it. If you serve dry sherry, see that it is slightly cooled, for that brings out the luscious qualities of the grape.

For the great crush of two hundred or so, you will have enough service to offer a selection of six or seven different drinks: a choice of four cocktails, Scotch and rye-and-soda, a sherry and a Madeira. In addition, and preferably in another room if possible, there should be a well appointed, completely stocked tea table for the benefit of those, and they are many, who still prefer a cup of tea and a sandwich to any cocktail in the world. Be sure to have your most decorative and charming guest presiding at the tea table.

If the party is simply three or four old friends gathering around the fire in the late afternoon, a bottle of sherry or a bottle of fine champagne is delightful.

For any party, average four drinks per person—some may take eight and some may sip one for three hours; and have a reserve hidden in your wine cellar whether this "cellar" is the hall closet or the huge, honeycombed cellars of a great house.

Have oceans of ice; don't depend entirely on the electric refrigerator. If you have a great number of guests, order extra tubs of cubes from your local ice company (they run about four hundred to the tub). In many cities there are services which will provide several dozen cubes in packages, delivered to order.

While there are still people who insist on putting ashes and

cigarette butts into their cocktail glasses, and throwing butts across the room into the fireplace to test their marksmanship, the great majority want ash trays, plenty of them and roomy ones. These must be emptied with some degree of regularity all afternoon, by a servant who has been so instructed, or the mess and the stench will be overpowering.

Have plenty of cigarettes, and not only your own brand.

Be sure to see that the glass situation is well in hand, for it is difficult to keep up a steady washing in the kitchen and supply the front with other things. It is simple these days, with the five-and-dimes and the department stores offering attractive glasses for very little money, to have a supply of auxiliaries which can go to the top shelf between parties. In a small community where a great deal of entertaining goes on, a community set may be acquired which can be sent around from house to house. In any city where there are catering services all kinds of glasses may be rented for a very nominal sum.

Plenty of food is as important at such a party as plenty of liquor, and both should be of the highest quality. The food, no matter how simple, should show some degree of imagination; for remember, you are paying a compliment in food and drink and nothing but the best is good enough for friends. You know your guests' capacities, but five pieces per person is a safe minimum. From there on, let your own ideas guide you. I have seen tables sagging with food remain untouched and, too, I have known the time when all sorts of emergency tactics had to be employed to feed guests who were seemingly on the verge of starvation.

Hors d'oeuvre are the most elastic of foods, for they may fit into any form and service. You may have great trays of them passed with regularity by the butler or maid; or they may be placed on plates or trays and left on a serving table for guests to help themselves. Again, for the really big party, there may

be a huge buffet table which simply groans with the prize products of your kitchen and your brain.

I visit a simple home in New York where hospitality reigns with as friendly a hand as anywhere I have ever known. With our simple drinks in front of the fire, there is always a tray with a choice morsel of cheese, perhaps, and some anchovies fresh from the can or bottle, some fresh, green, crisp tidbit such as the first green onions of the season, or a bit of succulent fenuchi, or some superb celery. With this, some crisp biscuits and an invitation to help oneself. Each morsel is delicious and stimulating to the appetite, for it is flavored with good will and love and understanding. (Incidentally, remember from now on in speaking of biscuits I mean what in America are generally called crackers. The English term "biscuit" happens to be more or less frequently used because most of the cocktail biscuits which have become popular formerly were imported; so, from now on, when I say biscuit, I don't mean the baking powder variety.)

In contrast to this hospitable spot in New York, I recall a most formal spot in California where every door knob and every cocktail glass was a museum piece. Here, when bidden for cocktails, I was confronted with a table that had graced the palace of some now-forgotten doge, and found huge joints of beef and perfectly done birds and the choicest delicacies the market afforded and the finest of cheeses and sauces. But here, amidst all the perfect appointments, there was a lack of hospitality so apparent to everyone that a heavy hush hung over the party. There was a definite feeling that the party was a duty to you and that you were being repaid for something you had extended in your own strange and peculiar way. In this setting, with some of the charm of that tiny New York apartment, a party could have been a thing such as dreams are made of. So, season well anything you do with the boon of

love and hospitality and you need have no fears for the success of the affair.

While this book is not primarily a cocktail book, there are certain things to remember about drinks and certain basic recipes and ideas which will help the hostess in preparing drinks and furnishing the bar.

First as to glassware. Simple, well-designed glassware is always preferred. America has so much that is fine nowadays that a choice should not be at all difficult. You will want to choose the three-ounce, stemmed cocktail glass which serves for practically every sort of cocktail; the seven-ounce Old Fashioned glass that has a good flare and a firm base; and the delicate, two-ounce sherry glass of graceful design. In considering highball glasses, and herein lies a battle, there are many schools of thought. Some prefer the ten-ounce glass which requires perhaps an ounce-and-a-quarter of whiskey, others the twelve-ounce glass requiring an ounce-and-a-half, and still others the fourteen-ounce glass with a full two ounces of whiskey to a highball. Personally, I cast my vote for the twelve or fourteen, preferably the latter, for it is a more functional glass. It may be used for the highball, the Tom Collins or Rum Collins, summer punches and even for a mint julep if you have the courage to make this drink.

Choose glasses of standard quality and design with a minimum of decoration. I prefer a clear glass, but that is a matter of personal preference. If colored glass is your choice, you should have it; to me the drink supplies the color and is enhanced by the gleaming crystal. Also, choose with regard to your pocketbook; however, the best is never expensive, for it is something that is a part of the decorative scheme of the home and something bought to last and to complement other things in your decorative idea.

Glass cocktail shakers, and mixers for Martinis and Man-

hattans (these never should be shaken), are greatly to be desired, as they give you a chance to see what you are doing and can be kept spotlessly clean and free from odors. You will find them in great abundance everywhere in the shops today. Large shakers are economical, for they are equally efficient for few or many cocktails.

You will find a glass jigger useful, but personally, I prefer a chemist's measuring glass because it is larger and on the whole more accurate. After all, each time you mix a cocktail it is just as important to be accurate as it is when mixing a chemical formula and the chemist's glass serves as a gentle reminder.

Other bits of hardware you will find necessary are a good strainer, one of the professional type which fits into a mixer and drains every drop of the precious fluid leaving the ice behind; a mixing spoon with a long handle; a good, heavy muddler; glass muddlers or spoons (after dinner coffees are the best) for your Old Fashioned drinking guests; the efficient and useful squeezer used in most bars—they can squeeze a lime within an inch of its existence.

If you are a mixer who enjoys showing off—and what person isn't?—you will find the big, vacuum ice buckets a boon to your bartending. If you choose the old-fashioned kind, find one that is lavish, for plenty of ice is the first requisite to good drinking in this country.

And don't forget the new and highly efficient corkscrews and bottle openers, and the patented beer can openers for your beer-drinking guests.

Beware of too many gadgets on your bar or mixing table, for they get in the way and sooner or later are bound to be found and muddle you. Have good equipment and be sure it is functional.

If you have no bar in your home, choose a steady table of good size and set your things on it. A good looking cloth that

is meant for that table and that alone, is something you need. If it is possible to store one of those portable bars, a boon to the small apartment dweller, do so, for such a bar has éclat and is a most efficient piece of equipment. It has ample room for bottles and glasses and the ice bucket and tongs and will hold a few other items here and there.

If you are serving champagne, don't forget to provide plenty of ice buckets or champagne coolers, for champagne without the proper coolth is dull stuff indeed.

Trays, deep ones, for glasses are a boon. If you will scour the hardware stores for the heavy, French lacquered tin baking pans that have a depth of about two-and-a-half inches and large, firm handles, you will find they make excellent cocktail trays. Even the tipsy guest who becomes helpful usually can manipulate one of these without doing too much damage.

Linens are important for the cocktail party. If there is a buffet table, you will want your most exquisite linen or lace cloth or your gayest peasant cloth as a background for the appetizing morsels on display. I vote, too, for the linen cocktail napkin which has body and absorbent qualities never found in paper. It is a compliment and a nice one to be particular enough to want to offer the best of everything to your guest.

China and silver, too, play an important part in the scheme for the cocktail party, for many people prefer a plate and fork service, and there are certain things which really require the aid of a fork. For these there are no set rules, though generally a bread and butter plate or salad size are the most desirable. Or you may have some of the amusing wooden plates so much in vogue lately, or your Great Aunt Abigail may have sent you a dozen silver plates for a wedding present. At any rate, you may use practically anything you have from glass to wood and feel that you're doing the right things. Salad forks or dessert size are best for hors d'oeuvre service.

Hot hors d'oeuvre need hot plates. If you are fortunate enough to have hot water dishes similar to the English buffet dishes, fine; but if you haven't, make the best of it by having everything doubly hot. Plenty of scalding hot water into which to dip plates for hot foods will solve your problem.

Do not despair if you are short plates and silver, for it is always possible to rent these things. Any catering or personal service shop has these to rent and they usually are good looking and nominally priced.

Here are some good and truly basic recipes for cocktails and long drinks. Along with them are rules for gauging the amount one may get from a fifth of each type of liquor. You may find it helpful in planning your party to know how to budget it beforehand.

When you give a party, gauge on an average of thirteen drinks per bottle and you will be safe on all sides. Of course, with vermouth and liqueurs used for flavoring, you will get far more; but for rum, whiskey, gin, brandy and applejack, thirteen drinks is a safe margin.

THE MARTINI

Put plenty of ice in your mixer. Add two or three strips of lemon peel; add three parts of gin and one part of French vermouth. Stir and pour into glasses with tiny, cocktail onions.

THE STANDARD MANHATTAN

$\frac{2}{3}$ Rye whiskey $\frac{1}{3}$ Italian vermouth
Dash of Angostura bitters

Stir vigorously in the mixer with plenty of ice. The cherry is the traditional addition to this drink.

 THE DRY MANHATTAN

*1/2 Rye whiskey 1/4 French vermouth
1/4 Italian vermouth*

Stir in the mixer with plenty of ice and serve. No cherry.

 THE DAIQUIRI

*Juice of 1/2 of a lime 2 ounce jigger of Bacardi rum
1 teaspoonful of bar sugar*

Shake well with plenty of ice and strain into iced glasses.

 THE BRONX

1/3 gin 1/3 French and Italian vermouth 1/3 orange juice

Shake well and strain into cocktail glass.

 WHITE SATIN

1/2 gin 1/2 fresh grapefruit juice

Shake well with plenty of ice and strain into glasses.

 OLD FASHIONED

*1 lump of sugar 1 slice of lemon peel
2 dashes of Angostura bitters
3 ounces of whiskey, rum or brandy*

Mash the sugar and bitters and lemon peel with a muddler. Add the ice and the spirit and stir well.

This is my own version of the Old Fashioned, for I loathe fruit salad in a drink and all the decorations that usually accompany this simple drink.

 DARK RUM COCKTAIL

*3/4 Jamaica rum 1 teaspoonful of brown sugar
1/4 lime juice*

Shake well with plenty of ice and strain into glasses.

 TOM COLLINS

*1 tablespoonful of sugar syrup or bar sugar
juice of one lemon or one and one half limes
4 ounces of gin*

Shake well in a cocktail shaker; pour into a 12-ounce glass with plenty of ice and fill with club soda. No fruit.

The same recipe is correct for a Rum Collins, using either Jamaica or Bacardi rum in place of gin.

SIDE CAR

$\frac{1}{2}$ lemon juice $\frac{1}{3}$ Cointreau $\frac{1}{3}$ Cognac

Shake well with plenty of ice and strain into glasses.

SOURS (WHISKEY, RUM OR BRANDY)

1 jigger (2 ounces) of the liquor chosen
1 teaspoonful of bar sugar juice of one lemon

Shake well with plenty of ice. Strain into a four-ounce glass and add club soda.

FRENCH SEVENTY-FIVES

Proceed as for Tom Collins, but substitute champagne for club soda.

JACK ROSE

$\frac{2}{3}$ applejack $\frac{1}{3}$ lemon juice dash of Grenadine

Shake well with ice; strain into glasses.

DEAUVILLE

$\frac{1}{2}$ applejack $\frac{1}{4}$ Cointreau $\frac{1}{4}$ orange juice

Shake well with plenty of ice; strain into glasses.

VERMOUTH CASSIS

(an ideal summer drink)

4-ounce glassful of French vermouth
1 liqueur glassful of Crème de Cassis

Mix in a tall glass with ice and fill with club soda.

And now, the table is set, the bottles laid out, the glasses gleaming, the flowers in their places, the cigarettes and ash trays arranged, food for the eye and the body and the soul ready. Adjust your tie or powder your nose, forget cares, let your best smile come out and on to a gay and happy adventure.