

Ringling in the Spring

By Kevin Fritz

For cocktail lovers, hope springs eternal with the celebration of zesty libations.

The arrival of spring can stimulate the senses from the touch of warm air on the skin to the sight of nature's returning flora and fauna. And for the taste buds, it's also the return of the spring cocktail. From martinis to mojitos, here is a sampling of some cocktails you can make at home to celebrate the onset of springtime.

Income Tax Cocktail

Unfortunately, spring and tax season go hand-in-hand, but the Income Tax Cocktail—closely related to the Bronx Cocktail—is the perfect way to embrace the realities of April 15. Its origin dates back to the turn of the 20th century when the most popular drink at the Old Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York City was a drink called the Duplex (vermouth and bitters) until one patron challenged bartender Johnny Solon to create something new. That drink became known as the Bronx (a martini with orange juice), which eventually morphed into the Income Tax Cocktail.

- 1 ½ ounces gin
- ¾ ounce sweet vermouth
- ¾ ounce dry vermouth
 - Two dashes of angostura bitters
 - Juice of a quarter wedge of fresh orange

Combine all components in a shaker. Shake well and strain into a cocktail glass. Garnish with an orange twist or an orange wheel.

April Rain

April Rain is a version of the vodka martini, using a splash of lime to wake the senses. Although the traditional martini is mixed with gin, vodka martinis have become quite popular in the United States. Virtually unknown in America until the 1940s, vodka—meaning “little water” in Russian—is now the top selling spirit in American bars, according to “Ultimate Bar Book.”

- 2 ounces vodka
- ½ ounce lime juice
- ½ ounce dry vermouth
- Lime peel for garnish

Pour ingredients into a cocktail shaker with ice cubes. Shake well and strain into a chilled cocktail glass. Garnish with the lime peel.

Mango Mojito

Tim McCaffery, chief mixologist with Lime Tree Cove, a gourmet cocktail website, recommends this Mango Mojito for the spring. The origin of the Mango Mojito began with the inclusion of mango flavoring into rum (several rum brands make mango flavored rums, such as Bacardi, Malibu, Cruzan). Since the mango pairs so well with lime and muddling is part of the mojito, people have started to revert back to straight, unflavored rum and adding mango directly to the cocktail. The mint and sugar complement their matching flavors in the cocktail.

- ⅓ lime
- 1 lime slice
- 1 sprig of mint
- 1 ounce simple syrup
- 1 ½ ounces mango nectar (easiest to find in Asian or Latin specialty grocery stores)
- 2 ½ ounces premium white rum for a blanco mojito or gold/amber rum for a mulata mojito
- Club or lemon/lime soda
- Lime Tree Cove sweet mint cocktail sugar

Drop the lime and mint into the bottom of a tall sturdy glass. Add the simple syrup, and muddle (mash) until the lime is juicy and the mint is soft but not in pieces (about 15 times or so). Add ice, then the rum and mango nectar. Top with club soda for a crisper cocktail or lemon/lime soda for an extra zing. Wet the rim of the glass with the remaining lime slice, and garnish the rim with the sweet mint cocktail sugar. **L**

More cocktail recipes can be found at CentralFloridaLifestyle.com

