

Buzzworthy

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Buzzworthy

Cocktails Inspired by
Female Literary Greats

Prestel
Munich · London · New York

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Introduction



There's nothing better than settling in for a night of reading with a glass of something special in hand. Maybe it's because stimulating our taste buds also stimulates our minds, helping us immerse ourselves more deeply in literary worlds. Or maybe it's because absorbing the words of a great writer can, on some level, lend the glass we're drinking greater meaning. Whatever the reason, books and cocktails are a magical combination.

These two ingredients blend beautifully in *Buzzworthy*, a cocktail book honoring a dazzling array of female writers. Literature is worth celebrating, and celebrating with a cocktail is more fun than without.

But why female writers, in particular? It's not because writing by women is a subgenre of writing—a sexist argument that has often been made to relegate female authors to a lower tier of literature.

Throughout history, writing by men has been celebrated more frequently, with more fanfare, and often at the expense of women's writing. Male writers were more likely to be signed to book deals and more likely to be reviewed in newspapers and magazines. For years, literary prizes favored men—particularly white ones—and women had a lesser chance of winning them, especially if their protagonists were female. But in recent years, that has changed. Since 2020, the majority of bestsellers have been written by women, and the literary prizes? Dominated by women, too. And maybe that shouldn't be a surprise—women buy and read more books than men do, by a large margin. Book editors are mostly women. Book clubs are an institution within female friend groups. The future of literature, it turns out, is female.

But women shaped the past and present of literature, too, and *Buzzworthy* evens the celebratory score by

paying tribute to female authors from the 19th century through to today. The cocktails in these pages are what are known as tribute cocktails—tipples dedicated to a person, and inspired by their life, their creative output, or their personality. One of the best examples of a tribute cocktail is the Margarita, created in Mexico in the early 1940s when Margarita Henkel, the daughter of a German ambassador, helped a bartender taste-test his new creation. Within the realm of literature, the most famous tribute cocktail is the Hemingway Daiquiri. As the legend goes, this cocktail was born when Ernest Hemingway stepped into the El Floridita bar in Havana, Cuba, in the 1930s, and sampled a daiquiri at the bar. He thought it was only okay—and told the bartender that he preferred it with no sugar and twice the rum, the first because he was diabetic and the second because he liked his drinks strong. The bartender took the notes to heart and created a cocktail with Hemingway in mind, and after some years and many modifications, it became known as the Hemingway Daiquiri or the Papa Doble, in reference to Hemingway’s nickname of “Papa” and the fact that the drink is twice the size of a regular cocktail.

But forget Hemingway! The authors in these pages deserve tribute cocktails every ounce as celebrated as his daiquiri. If you’re in the mood for something challenging and rewarding, you might consider quaffing a Toni Morrison, which combines blueberries and gin into a towering, impressive fizz. Feeling rebellious and unconventional (and a little bit floral)? The Emily Dickinson, a low-proof sour with vermouth and flower syrup, might wet your whistle. And if you want to get on the level necessary to understand our internet-warped culture, you could imbibe a Jia Tolentino, a purple sparkler inspired by lean.

Wherever you start, I hope *Buzzworthy* helps you find a few new favorite authors, and a few new favorite cocktails. If that’s not worth celebrating, I don’t know what is.

Jennifer Croll

How to Use This Book

Each biography in this book is paired with a cocktail recipe. Some recipes contain smaller sub-recipes for syrups or infused alcohols; you can find these at the back of the book, in a section called Recipes.

Uncertain about a piece of equipment, a type of glass, a garnish, or a particular ingredient? You can find descriptions of all of these things at the front of the book, in sections called Basic Equipment, Glassware, Cocktail Ingredients, Types of Alcohol, Cocktails for Dietary Restrictions, and Garnishes and Rims.

The following measurements and abbreviations also appear throughout the book:

1 shot = 1 oz / 30 ml

* Denotes low proof (lower alcohol than a typical cocktail, about 4-7%)

** Denotes zero-proof (a cocktail with no alcohol)

And finally, if you want to explore the writing of the women in *Buzzworthy*, there's a TBR List at the back featuring selected books and essays—keep it handy for when you hit up your local bookstore or library.



Basic Equipment

You'll need a few tools in order to properly assemble a cocktail.



Shaker

There are different varieties of shaker. The easiest one to use is the standard shaker, which features three parts: a bottom, a built-in strainer, and a cap. Another option is a Boston shaker, which has two roughly equal-sized parts: a metal bottom and a glass (or metal) top. If you use one of these you'll also need to buy a strainer, since they don't have one built in. Boston shakers are popular with professional bartenders because they're unfussy and easy to clean, and you'll find they work best if you want to make multiple cocktails.



Strainer

You'll need one of these if you use a Boston shaker. There are different types: a Hawthorne strainer is a steel paddle that fits over the end of your Boston shaker and does the trick for most drinks, while a fine strainer is used for drinks like Martinis, where you don't want little pieces of ice or citrus to ruin the smooth surface of the drink.



Jigger/shot glass

A jigger or shot glass is used for measuring alcohol or other liquids for cocktails. They come in different sizes, most typically 1 to 2 oz / 30 to 60 ml (although you can find them smaller and larger).



Mixing glass

Not all cocktails are shaken. For those that are stirred, you'll need a mixing glass. You can buy one specifically made for the job, but you can also just use a pint glass.



Bar spoon

A long, slender spoon that can be used to mix stirred drinks, a bar spoon is also sometimes used as a measure; it's equal to 1 teaspoon.

Muddler

A muddler is a tool used to mash fruits or herbs at the bottom of a drink. Muddlers can be made from wood or metal, though the metal varieties tend to last longer.



Citrus squeezer

You don't need a high-end juicer to squeeze citrus fruits. There are different types, but the easiest is the hand-held press, which allows you to squeeze a lemon or lime one half at a time.



Blender

If you want to make blended drinks, you'll need a blender. It doesn't need to be expensive or high-end, but you do need one that can crush ice.

Glassware

Half the fun of cocktails is in the presentation, and glassware is a big part of that. Many cocktails are traditionally served in a certain type of glass; a good example is the Martini glass, made to suit its namesake drink. You don't have to be dogmatic about glassware, though; there's always room for experimentation, and sometimes you'll see cocktails being served in vessels that weren't originally meant for cocktails at all.

Highball / Collins glass

Highball and Collins glasses are very similar and are often used interchangeably. Both are tall, narrow glasses meant for serving mixed drinks (though the Collins glass is somewhat narrower and taller).

Martini / cocktail glass

Like highball and Collins glasses, Martini and cocktail glasses look similar, though the cocktail glass is a bit smaller. They're conical in shape and meant for cocktails served straight up without ice.

Rocks glass

Rocks glasses (also called Old Fashioned or lowball glasses) are short and typically used for drinks served on ice—hence the name.

Coupe

Coupe glasses were originally designed to serve champagne, but the wide mouth isn't that great for bubbles. Today, they're a popular choice for mixed drinks served straight up.

Champagne flute

Flutes are tall, slender glasses with small mouths designed to retain the bubbles in sparkling drinks. They're great for any cocktail made with sparkling wine.

Wine glass

Sometimes, you might want to serve a cocktail in a wine glass, particularly if it contains wine. You can use one with a stem, or go stemless.

Nick and Nora glass

Somewhere between a coupe and a cocktail glass, the Nick and Nora glass is a small, elegant stemmed glass with a slightly narrower rim than either of its competitors. Use it for any drink served straight up.





Copita glass

The copita, a tulip-shaped glass originally meant for sherry (and these days often used for whiskey), can be used for cocktails too.

Copa de balon glass

A stemmed, globe-shaped glass that resembles a red wine glass, the copa de balon is typically used for bubbly drinks like Spanish-style gin and tonics, Portuguese Porto Tónicos, or Aperol Spritzes.

Mint Julep cup

Mint Juleps are traditionally served in a metal tumbler that gets nice and frosty due to the icy cold drink within.

Tiki mugs and glasses

Retro-tropical tiki bars have their own particular types of glassware. The most common are tiki mugs or glasses molded in the shape of Polynesian tiki carvings or other tropical shapes such as pineapples. Tiki drinks, in turn, tend to feature tropical flavors like pineapple, coconut, and rum, and are often quite strong.

Mugs

Hot drinks are sometimes served in mugs (often clear) with a handle, or insulated glassware.

Beer glass

You might serve a beer-based drink in a beer glass, though you can always get more creative.

Mason jar

Mason jars are used for canning and preserving food but, lately, they've become a hip vessel for serving cocktails. Bonus: if you pop a lid on, you can take your drink with you for a picnic.

Cocktail Ingredients



Cocktails rely on the skillful layering of flavors to create a beautiful, balanced, and delicious drink. These are some of the ingredients you'll use.

Alcoholic spirits

Most cocktails contain alcohol, which comes in many different varieties. You can learn about them in detail in the Types of Alcohol section.



Infused alcohols

Infused alcohols can heighten the complexity of your cocktail. All you need is a neutral liquor (vodka is the most common alcohol used in infusions, but you can infuse basically anything) and a complementary flavor. Combine your flavoring and your alcohol in a clean, airtight container (such as a Mason jar), seal tightly, and leave somewhere cool and dark until the liquor has absorbed enough flavor. Strain out the flavoring, and store in an airtight container again. Some ingredients, like jalapeño peppers, don't need much time to infuse at all—just a few hours—while others (ginger, lemongrass) need up to a week.



Non-alcoholic spirits

People who don't consume alcohol can still enjoy interesting non-alcoholic cocktails, and booze-free spirits can help. The OG non-alcoholic distilled spirit is Seedlip, which comes in different flavor profiles to complement various zero-proof concoctions. Other producers mimic specific types of alcohol: you can try Monday gin, Lyre's dark cane spirit in place of rum, or Ritual zero-proof tequila, to name just a few. Still, non-alcoholic spirits may be best considered their own category rather than a 1:1 replacement: cocktails are all about balance, and it's a good idea to experiment to make sure everything in your drink is working in harmony.

Citrus juices

Many cocktail recipes involve citrus juice (usually lemon or lime). Always use fresh juice—it tastes better, and all you need is a cheap hand-held squeezer.





Simple syrup

Simple syrup is a sugar-and-water mixture used to sweeten cocktails. The most common version uses a 1:1 ratio of sugar to water, though some recipes call for a “rich” simple syrup that uses a 2:1 ratio. To make it, add sugar and water to a saucepan, heat on medium heat until the sugar is dissolved and the liquid is clear, then take off the heat and allow to cool. You can store it in the fridge for up to a month. See pages 142–43 for detailed recipes for different flavored syrups.

Shrubs

Shrubs are sweet, fruit-based drinking vinegars that bring an acidic tartness to cocktails. You can make shrubs via a “hot” or a “cold” method. The hot method is similar to making a flavored simple syrup—you simmer fresh fruit in sugar water and then add vinegar—while for the cold method, you toss fresh fruit in sugar, allow it to sit, and add vinegar to the syrup that forms. The cold method has a brighter, fruitier flavor, while the hot method tastes a bit more like jam.



Eggs and foamers

Some cocktail recipes call for egg whites to create a silky foam at the top of the drink. It’s best to use fresh eggs for this, and you can separate the white from the yolk using a slotted spoon. But if you’re vegan or don’t like consuming raw eggs, you can substitute in aquafaba, a fancy-sounding word that refers to the liquid—which is typically discarded—found in a can of chickpeas. Just sub in the same measure of aquafaba as you would use of egg whites (a typical egg white is about 1 oz / 30 ml).

Dairy

Some cocktails (especially dessert cocktails, but also frothy drinks like the Ramos Gin Fizz) include dairy—typically cream, which is richer and less prone to curdling than milk. If you’re vegan, rich nut milks and coconut cream can make good substitutes.

Bitters

Cocktail bitters are flavorings added to mixed drinks in drops or dashes to create more complex flavor profiles. There are different types of bitters: aromatic (strong botanical flavors; Angostura bitters are an aromatic), citrus (orange is the most common), herbal, spice, fruit, and nut.



Types of Alcohol

A cocktail's personality is partially dictated by the kind of alcohol it contains. Even within a type, there's a lot of variation—premium brands may taste different from more budget-friendly varieties, and if you explore small distilleries close to home (encouraged!) you'll find even more local character.

One key thing to remember for a delicious cocktail is to use alcohol that hasn't expired; a decade-old dusty bottle from the back of your parents' liquor cabinet will probably not make the best tippie.

As a rule of thumb, you should consume hard alcohol within a year; it won't become unsafe to drink after that, but it will begin to lose both flavor and alcohol content. Any fortified wines or alcohols under 15% ABV should be stored in the fridge after opening—and while you can keep them for a while that way, even refrigerated fortified wines should be consumed within three months. Just think of it as an incentive to experiment widely with the same bottle—or share with friends.

Here are a few of the most common types of alcohol you'll encounter in this book.

Whiskey

Nobody can agree on how to spell whiskey (or, whisky), but its rich flavor makes it one of the most popular kinds of liquor used in cocktails. Whiskey is distilled from different types of grain—barley, corn, rye, and wheat—and then aged in oak barrels. The most common are Scotch (malted grain whiskies made in Scotland and aged for a minimum of three years), bourbon (American whiskeys made from corn), and rye (made from rye, and often produced in Canada or the USA). Famous whiskey cocktails include the Old Fashioned, the Manhattan, and the Whiskey Sour.

Gin

Gin is a clear alcohol defined by the flavor of juniper berries. Some gins add juniper post-distillation, while others (distilled gins and London dry gins) involve it in the distillation process. While gin has to taste predominantly of juniper in order to be considered gin, it often features other botanical flavors too, including citrus, anise, coriander, cucumber, and rose petals. It's a favorite with bartenders, and you can find it in drinks like the Negroni, Martini, and French 75.

