

Bar

The Bar Snack Standard

Five steps for the small bowls beside the drink. They cost less than the garnish, and a guest notices at once when they are missing, stale or left empty.

Who

Bartenders and bar waiters, checked by the bar manager

When

With every guest's first drink, and for as long as they stay

You need

Two snacks portioned for the shift, small bowls, picks, a dish for stones

Measured by Two snacks with every first drink · Bowls replaced before they are empty · A dish for stones beside olives

1 Portion fresh

Prepare snacks for one service at a time, never the whole day. Opened nuts and crisps go into sealed, labelled containers, and olives stay in their brine until the moment a bowl is filled.

"Almonds opened 17:30, bin at close. Olives in brine, fridge 2."

Common mistake Filling a large jar in the morning to save time. By nine at night the almonds taste of the room.

2 Serve unasked

Two snacks reach the guest with the first drink, without being asked for, chosen to suit it. Anything with a stone or a shell comes with an empty dish, and every bowl comes with a spoon or picks.

"Some green olives and salted almonds while you look at the menu."

Common mistake Waiting for the guest to ask. Most never do, and leave thinking the bar does not offer them.

3 Mind allergies

Know the allergens in every snack on tonight's list. If a guest mentions an allergy, or a child is at the table, swap the nuts for a safe option with a fresh bowl, a fresh spoon and clean hands.

"These are made without nuts or sesame, Mrs Mensah. I've brought them in a fresh bowl."

Common mistake Picking the nuts out of a mixed bowl. Traces stay behind, and the guest who said "allergy" meant it.

4 Replace, don't refill

Look at the bowls every time you pass. When one is a third full, replace it with a clean bowl, and take the dish of stones away before it fills. Never pour new snacks on top of old ones.

"A fresh bowl for you, Mr Bergström. The pistachios came out of the oven just now."

Common mistake Topping up the same bowl. The new nuts sit on the salt and crumbs of the last hour.

5 Reset the seat

When a guest leaves, clear the bowls within two minutes and throw away what is left, even if it looks untouched. The next guest in that seat gets new bowls with the first drink, as the first one did.

"Seat four is free. Clean bowls and new olives before anyone sits."

Common mistake Moving a full bowl from a guest who has left to a new one. It looks generous and it is someone else's leftovers.

Snacks by the Drink

A pairing guide built on snacks most bar kitchens can make. Swap any item for your own and keep the reason in the third column.

The drink	The snack	Why it works
Spritz or Americano	Green olives, potato crisps	Salt softens the bitter orange.
Martini or Gibson	Salted almonds, a few olives	A dry drink beside something rich.
Champagne	Parmesan shards, warm gougères	The bubbles cut through the cheese.
Whisky or brandy	Dark chocolate, roasted pecans	Sweet and smoky meet halfway.
Beer	Taralli, roasted chickpeas	Dry crunch beside a cold glass.
Alcohol-free cocktail	Dates, spiced cashews	The same welcome, with or without alcohol.

How to use this with your team

Agree the pairings with the chef at this week's briefing. Brief one row a day and let each bartender taste the pair before service. The bar manager checks two tables a night against the card.

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