

Bar

The Low and No Standard

Five steps for guests who drink little or no alcohol. Many decide what they think of the bar from the answer to "What do you have without alcohol?"

Who

Bartenders and bar waiters, checked by the bar manager

When

Every guest who asks for, or orders, a drink without alcohol

You need

An alcohol-free section on the menu, a spec for each, house cordials

Measured by At least 4 alcohol-free drinks listed · Same glass and garnish as a cocktail · No guest asked why they are not drinking

1 Build the list

Keep at least four drinks without alcohol and two low in alcohol on the menu, each with a spec, a glass and a garnish. Print them on the cocktail page, not among the soft drinks.

"Without alcohol: Bergamot Tonic, Garden Collins, Spiced Date Sour, Verjus Spritz."

Common mistake Offering three juices and a cola as the alcohol-free choice. The guest reads it as an afterthought.

2 Offer it plainly

When you present the menu, mention the alcohol-free drinks in the same sentence as the cocktails, to every guest. Never ask why someone is not drinking, and never comment on the order.

"The cocktails are on this page, and the four next to them are made without alcohol."

Common mistake Asking "Are you sure?" or "Not drinking tonight?" The guest owes nobody a reason.

3 Make it properly

Make it with the same jigger, shake, chilled glass and garnish as a cocktail. Give it length and bitterness with house cordials, tea, verjus or shrubs, so it is more than fruit juice and sugar.

"A Garden Collins, Ms Varga: cucumber, green tea and lime, over clear ice."

Common mistake Pouring it straight from a bottle because there is no spirit to measure. The guest sees the shortcut.

4 Keep it separate

Rinse the shaker and jigger before every alcohol-free drink, or keep a set for them alone. Write "zero" on the ticket, and tell the server which glass is which when two drinks look alike.

"Table eight, two Collins. The one with the cucumber ribbon is zero, for Mr Rahman."

Common mistake Shaking a zero drink in the tin that just made a whisky sour. For some guests this is a matter of faith.

5 Remember it

Note in the guest profile that the guest prefers drinks without alcohol, and which one they liked. On the next visit, start with that drink, and tell the restaurant team before dinner.

"Mrs Chen, room 304: no alcohol. Liked the Spiced Date Sour, less sweet. Restaurant told."

Common mistake Offering wine to the same guest every evening. They answered once, and once should be enough.

Your Alcohol-Free List

Three drinks without alcohol that your team can make and describe from memory. Fill it in for your own bar, then put the three on the menu.

The long, fresh one

Name and spec in ml _____

Glass and garnish _____

One sentence to describe it _____

The snack it goes with _____

The bitter aperitivo

Name and spec in ml _____

Glass and garnish _____

One sentence to describe it _____

The snack it goes with _____

The low-alcohol classic

Name and spec in ml _____

Glass and garnish _____

One sentence to describe it _____

The snack it goes with _____

How to use this with your team

Write the three at Monday's briefing with the head bartender. Each day one bartender makes one for the team to taste. By Friday anyone on the floor can describe all three without the menu.

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