

Oranges, Limes And Lemons

Everyone asks me, "What kind of a garnish do you use for a drink like this?"

I simply say, "It doesn't need one."

Usually this is followed by a quizzical look and the explanation follows.

My philosophy on garnishes for drinks is simple. If it adds to the drink then use it, if it is out of habit and it doesn't add, don't. Lime wedges, lemon twists and orange wheels all have a lot of juicy flavour. Once these garnishes have been placed in the drink they can dramatically change the taste profile of the beverage.

If you don't believe me try making a rum and coke at home; preferably with a dark rum. For the first drink, sip it without a garnish. For the second, squeeze a lime and add the wedge, stir and taste. Finally, repeat with a lemon wedge. I guarantee that you will find all 3 drinks dramatically different in flavour. The natural acids and oils of the fruit will bring out different flavours in the original drink. By using a dark rum, different tones in the rum will come out a different points in the consumption process from the varying citric acids and oils from the fruit.

Some garnishes are simply for presentation which can add a lot to the drink as well since the presentation of a drink is every bit as important as the presentation of food. There are few garnishes that when added to the drink after the presentation that will not change the balance of the drink but here are a few suggestions: Star fruit slices, frozen grapes, gummy bears, flavoured ice cubes (when the drink is consumed quickly...no melting), frozen cranberries and blueberries etc.

Rimmers are also very big right now and they can add so much to the drink like the salt rim on a margarita. Just make sure that the rim does not overpower the drink itself. The first sensory stimuli that your guest will receive is the nose of the drink followed very quickly by the taste of the rim, then the drink itself. If the rim is very sweet the only thing they are going to taste is sugar.

Olives for martinis are a definite must and there is such an incredible selection now. The best I have found are the Oliveit And More brand which boasts over 20 gourmet stuffed olives, which leads me to my next point. Their olives are plump and look great in a glass and taste great because you can keep munching on them while you sip.

If you are going to add a garnish make sure it is in proportion to the size of the glass and the drink itself. Do not add a huge skewer of fruit to a Daiquiri if the glass only holds 4 oz!

The moral of the story.....choice wisely when it comes to garnishes sometimes less is more in the realm of beverages!

