

Smoking Not Your Style? Try a Cannabis Cocktail.

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In California and other states that have legalized marijuana for recreational use, you can now sidle up to a bar and sip something sold as a pot cocktail. These drinks tend to look a lot like the Instagram-friendly classic cocktails—think of the old fashioned, the daiquiri, and the Negroni—that have sprung up at establishments around the country, except that they are infused with cannabis. Just don't expect any of them to get you truly high.

Even in places where both pot and alcohol are legal to consume, there are legal barriers that typically prevent bars and restaurants from serving anything with THC, marijuana's main psychoactive ingredient. Instead, bartenders serving pot cocktails infuse their drinks with cannabidiol (CBD), an oil extracted from hemp. CBD delivers a calming "body high" that goes well with alcohol but leaves your mind alone.

That doesn't mean real pot cocktails are impossible to come by. You just have to make them at home.

Infusing weed into cocktails works like infusing any other herb or spice: You can put it into your booze directly or make it part of another cocktail ingredient, such as syrups, shrubs, or bitters. Once you've created a pot-infused element, you mix it into a cocktail as you normally would—with the provisos that the taste and smell will be subtly (or in some cases radically) different, and that you should probably label the infused bottle carefully.

Balanced well, a pot infusion adds a grassy, herbal complexity to the drink, as well as an extra layer of chemically aided comfort and relaxation.

To make infused simple syrup: Start by decarboxylating the ground weed (as described in the [brownie recipe](#)), then wrap it in a cheesecloth pouch. Heat that pouch on the stove with 12 ounces of water and 12 ounces of sugar until the sugar has completely dissolved into the water. Let all the ingredients simmer on a low burner for an hour or so, then pull out the pouch, and, after it cools, pour the remaining syrup into a plastic storage container with a lid. (You can store this in your refrigerator for up to a month.)

Congratulations! You've made pot-infused simple syrup, which means you can now make pot-infused old fashioned, sazeracs, and many other drinks.

To make infused alcohol: Infusing pot directly into alcohol is even easier. Take about a quarter-ounce of marijuana, gently grind it, then drop it into a mason jar with 16 ounces of booze. Leave it in a cool, dark location for anywhere from three days to a month. At the end, strain out the pot using cheesecloth and store the liquor in a fresh jar.

Pot-infused spirits have a vegetal, spice-rack quality to both the nose and the tongue. It's a little like sage, thyme, or arugula, which means it goes especially well with funky sours and bitter drinks, such as the underappreciated "old pal," a rye-based variation on the Negroni.

OLD FASHIONED

2 dashes Angostura bitters
¼ ounce pot-infused simple syrup
2 ounces uninfused bourbon

Stir all ingredients over ice 40–50 times, then strain into a double rocks glass over a 2×2-inch ice cube. Garnish with an orange twist.

OLD PAL

2 dashes Peychaud's bitters
1 ounce Cynar
1 ounce sweet vermouth (Carpano Antica or Dolin)
1 ¼ ounces pot-infused rye

Stir all ingredients over ice 40–50 times, then strain into a double rocks glass over a 2×2-inch ice cube. Garnish with a lemon twist.

A word on dosing: Pot infusions are an inexact science, and everyone reacts to marijuana differently. Don't over-infuse your alcohol. In the beginning, it's also smart to split the liquor in a recipe between infused and uninfused booze. In an "old pal," for example, you might use just a fourth of an ounce of pot-infused rye plus one ounce of unaltered rye. Always be cautious when mixing alcohol and marijuana. Basically, don't overdo it.

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