



DRINKS

Mixing Up Bloody Marys

New York bartenders are creating surprising riffs on the popular brunch drink.

BY ELIN McCOY

PHOTOGRAPH BY ZACHARY ZAVISLAK

▶ UNDER THE WATCHFUL EYE OF A puckish old king, bartender Bill Dante lines up six different Bloody Marys on the smooth, polished wood. The St. Regis hotel's King Cole Bar—with its famous Maxfield Parrish mural as backdrop—is where the ultimate brunch drink was probably introduced to America more than 75 years ago. What better starting point to assess Manhattan's new riffs on the recipe?

The original Bloody Mary, called the Red Snapper at the King Cole Bar, was a tangy mix of tomato juice, vodka, Worcestershire sauce, lemon juice, salt and cayenne pepper. Now, bartenders are transforming the

familiar drink in eccentric ways. WD-50's Proud Mary is pink and carbonated. Spins at The Rum House include a version that uses white rye whiskey instead of vodka and is garnished with a slice of spicy salami. The only constant ingredient is tomato juice.

At King Cole, one variation relies on smoky single malt, and another features gin and clam juice. My favorite—the subtle Mary Terranean, which is smoothed with olive oil—also got the vote of Jeffrey Pogash, author of *Bloody Mary* (Thornwillow, 2011), who was tagging along to offer advice. “A good Bloody has to be a balance between spice, spirit, bite and texture,” Pogash says as we head downtown to try more.

At Prune, we find 10 offerings. The refreshing Classic beats other versions, such as the Caesar, which is made with gin and a pickled egg. Mezcal and chipotle peppers give the Bloody Maria at Pulino's Bar and Pizzeria a delicious smoky tang with a powerful kick that was great with pizza.

Neil Da Costa, a flavor chemist at International Flavors & Fragrances Inc., who has studied Bloody Mary ingredients with gas and liquid chromatography, says keeping the drink ice-cold slows down the chemical reactions that degrade the taste within 30 minutes. The bottom line: Drink up fast.

We tasted a total of 26 variations at four bars. Two of the best recipes are given at left.

THE MARY TERRANEAN

(King Cole Bar, The St. Regis, New York; created at The St. Regis Grand, Rome)

1¼ oz. Fris vodka
6 oz. St. Regis Bloody Mary mix
1 teaspoon extra virgin olive oil
Dash of fresh chopped oregano and basil
Fresh basil leaves

Fill a large wine glass with ice cubes, add all ingredients, stir and garnish with basil leaves.

ST. REGIS BLOODY MARY MIX

32 oz. Sacramento tomato juice
2 oz. freshly squeezed lemon juice
2 oz. freshly squeezed lime juice
4 teaspoons sriracha chili sauce
2 tablespoons horseradish
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
1 teaspoon toasted celery seed, ground
1 teaspoon toasted black pepper, ground
2 teaspoons sea salt
2 teaspoons Aleppo pepper
Mix together in a blender.

BLOODY MARIA

(Pulino's Bar and Pizzeria)

1½ oz. Sombra Mezcal
1 oz. Pulino's Maria puree
½ oz. freshly squeezed lime juice
Ice

Tomato juice

Pour mezcal, puree and lime juice into a glass.

Add ice, fill with tomato juice and stir.

PULINO'S MARIA PUREE

Two 7 oz. cans La Morena chipotle peppers
Half 5 oz. bottle Tabasco sauce
5 oz. agave syrup, made with 50 percent water
5 oz. freshly squeezed lemon juice
¼ cup black peppercorns
¼ cup kosher salt
¼ cup celery salt
⅓ cup oregano

Blend all ingredients in a food processor for 30 seconds.

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