

After-dinner cream drinks: alcoholic milkshakes

By BOB KNOWLES

I was wandering around inside a local ABC store several days ago, when I was struck by the thought that a novice could get awfully confused with so many alcoholic beverages to choose from.

An important step to remember when buying an alcoholic beverage is to find out the beverage's strength. Depending on your taste or drinking habits, alcoholic strength can be influential when buying booze.

Look closely at the label of the bottle you are interested in. On it, in small print, there will be the word "proof" and a number. Every alcoholic beverage, except beer and wine, must have its proof—the measure of the alcoholic strength—printed on the label. One proof equals 0.5 percent of alcohol by volume. A bottle of Mexican Mescal, a type of tequila, is 180 proof or 90 percent alcohol. As far as I know, it is the strongest drink you can buy.

Liquor also has as many calories per ounce as its proof. One shot of 86 proof Canadian whiskey contains 86 calories. Alcoholic drinks are no friends to those who are constant weight watchers. But then neither is beer because of the additional calories that remain due to the cereal content of the beer's original grain.

weekend bartender

I mentioned last week that today's topic would be cream drinks. Cream drinks are made with half-and-half, or whatever coffee cream is available. They are requested most often after dinner and are a big favorite with women, because the basic flavor of all cream drinks is sweet and creamy. They are not very strong because the liqueurs used in the recipes are low in alcoholic content. One or two cream drinks won't knock you for a loop, but they are rich and sweet like alcoholic milkshakes, therefore very filling.

Besides coffee cream—a scoop of vanilla ice cream is a good substitute—cream drinks are made from liqueurs or cordials. The two words mean the same thing and are interchangeable.

Cordials are a sweet, colorful family of liquors produced from fruits, flowers, plants and juices, whose extracts are combined with a prepared spirit base, such as brandy, to give you the final product. The U.S. government requires that cordials must be 2.5 percent sugar

by weight.

Many liqueurs are made from secret recipes and processes. Benedictine is an example. It is a herb-type cordial with a long history, originally made by the Benedictine monks from their own special formula culminating in a honey-brandy taste.

Creme liqueurs are cordials with very high sugar contents. Their creamy consistency helps to give them their name. Creme de cacao, made from cacao and vanilla beans, and creme de menthe, made from mint, are the two most popular creme liqueurs. Both come in two different colors.

When making cream drinks or drinks containing cordials, make sure you wash out your jigger combination after measuring either cream or liqueurs. This is done because both of them will leave a coating on the inside that will effect the flavor of the next ingredient measured. The same policy holds true for glasses. Cream drinks will leave a coating on the inside of the glass that only a good rinsing will remove.

Here are several recipes of some popular cream drinks. Give them a try; they aren't hard to make:

Grasshopper

2 ozs. of cream

½ oz. of white creme de cacao
½ oz. of green creme de menthe

Put a scoop or handful of crushed ice into a mixing cup or blender. Add the ingredients. Blend and strain into a stemmed cocktail glass (3½-4 oz.)

Substitute a scoop of vanilla ice cream for the cream and don't strain, and you'll have a Chicago Bomb. Substitute Kaluha for the creme de cacao for a coffee grasshopper.

Golden Cadillac

2 ozs. of cream
½ oz. of white creme de cacao
½ oz. of Galliano—an Italian liqueur with a hint of licorice

A scoop or handful of ice in a mixing cup or blender. Add ingredients. Blend and strain into glass.

Brandy Alexander

2 oz. of cream
½ oz. of brown creme de cacao
½ oz. of brandy

Ice in mixing cup or blender. Add ingredients. Blend and strain into a glass. Top with nutmeg.

Bob Knowles is a staff writer for the Daily Tar Heel. He holds a degree from the Detroit Professional Bartenders School.

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