

8 At the Bar

CATERING IN THEORY

The staff and the equipment

Bar, café and pub staff

Job	Responsibilities, skills, personal qualities, entry requirements
Publican/Licensee	Managing pubs, clubs and bars, organising deliveries, managing stock, overseeing customer service, recruiting, training and supervising staff, handling wages, book-keeping and accounts, liaising with breweries, suppliers and customers, marketing. Numeracy and bookkeeping, ability to work long hours, organisational and leadership qualities, outgoing personality. Experience of customer service and bar work, trainee management courses in business, marketing, hotel and catering or hospitality management.
Barista	Making and serving coffee and hot drinks in cafés, coffee shops, restaurants and hotels, taking orders and payment, serving light meals and snacks, cleaning and tidying work area and equipment. Customer service skills, ability to work individually or as part of a team, enjoy working in a busy environment, able to work under pressure, attention to detail, knowledge of origin, variety and flavour of tea, coffee and chocolate, be sociable and friendly, diploma or apprenticeship or experience of customer service or catering.
Cellar technician	Installing and maintaining drinks systems in pubs, hotels, bars and restaurants, making sure drinks are stored safely and correctly, checking equipment and finding and fixing problems, training bar staff to use new equipment and promoting new products. Physically fit, practical, good at problem solving, communication and customer service skills, able to follow instructions, operate technical equipment and to use your initiative. Experience of bars, technical competences, diploma in engineering technology.
Mixologist	Serving alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages to restaurant and bar patrons. Advising customers and serving them beer and wine, making classic cocktails or creating new recipes, stocking the bar with glasses, garnishes, mixers and ice, processing cash and card payments, keeping the bar clean and tidy, setting up before opening and clearing after closing. Customer service and communication skills, knowledge of beers, wines, cocktails, physically fit and flexible. Mixology training, a diploma or apprenticeship in

	catering.
Counter service assistant	Serving customers in cafés, fast-food outlets, self-service restaurants, delis and canteens, greeting and serving customers, giving advice about menu choices, handling raw and cooked food safely, cleaning and tidying work areas, taking payments and giving change and receipts from the cash register. Customer service skills, a team player, able to work under pressure, physically fit and healthy, a smart appearance. Experience in hospitality, catering or customer service and an apprenticeship.

Bar equipment and display

The set-up of a bar depends on the size of the venue it is in.

In restaurants, bars tend to be service-only and do not serve customers directly. These can have short bar counters and no bar stools, but they should have space for all the necessary storage and equipment a bartender might need.

All bars have taps to pour beer or cider from, with drip trays under them to catch the waste and they also tend to have soda guns with the most common mixers in them. Behind the bar there should be fridges to chill bottled beers, wines and mixers as well as shelves on which spirits and liqueurs are kept. Spirit optics are used to precisely measure out the ordered spirits such as gin, vodka, rum, whisky, tequila and bourbon.

The hand sinks for rinsing glasses or fruit for garnishes, the cutting boards and garnish bins are under the bar while an ice machine is usually out of sight. On the floor, there will be some kind of non-slip rubber mats to prevent staff from slipping.

The cash registers can either be placed at the front of the bar or at the rear of the bar. There are also point of sale (POS) systems so that bartenders can take and send food orders to the kitchen. There may be controls for lighting, air-conditioning, heating and music, placed behind the bar.

Bars can also have stools, chairs and tables where customers can sit and decorative mirrors within and around the bar display to create a particular image or effect.

Drinks and service

Bar service

In a well-stocked bar, you would expect to find the following tools:

- **a waiter's friend**, a gadget with a bottle opener to open bottled beers and soft drinks;
- **a corkscrew**, to remove corks from bottles of wine;
- **a foil cutter**, to remove the foil on top of bottles;
- an **ice bucket**, to keep white wine and champagne chilled;
- a **paring knife**, for slicing lemons and other fruit to garnish drinks;
- a **cocktail shaker**, with a screw top and a pouring spout to mix and pour cocktails;

- a **pitcher**: a tall mixing glass to stir cocktails;
- an **electric blender**, to make creamy cocktails;
- measures, also known as **jiggers**: to measure out liqueurs or spirits;
- a long **bar spoon**, to stir drinks;
- plastic **stirrers** or **swizzle sticks**, to put into customers' drinks;
- **straws**, cocktail sticks, umbrellas and serviettes;
- **classic shaped cocktail glasses** with solid stems;
- **champagne flutes** with very long stems;
- **highball glasses** for soft drinks or long cocktails;
- **wine glasses** or **goblets**, pint and half pint **beer glasses**;
- **old-fashioned glasses**, short with a thick bottom to serve spirits such as whisky;
- **liqueur glasses**, with a delicate stem and a small bowl;
- **shot glasses**, for strong spirits such as tequila.

Understanding and serving wine

1. Wine comes from liquid fermented fruit, i.e. crushed grapes, which undergo a process called fermentation. Ripe and sweet grapes make a more alcoholic wine, as more sugar is transformed into alcohol. The characteristics of wine are affected by: the material and size of the container used, the temperature and length of **fermentation**, the colour and variety of grapes, the climate and soil they grow in and any additives used during fermentation.
2. **White wines** are produced from green grapes or more rarely from black grapes without their skins. White wine is generally light, crisp and fruity, making it a great aperitif, classic aperitif wines include champagne or prosecco, but also light-bodied white wines like Sauvignon blanc or Vouvray. Other aperitifs include lighter rosé wines; fortified wines like sherry; or Martini. White and aperitif wines are usually served chilled.
3. **Red wines** are always produced from black grapes, which undergo additional pressing during the fermentation process to release tannins and colour from their skin. They usually have a deep, velvety colour and spicy, herby flavour. Some of them are further matured and conditioned in oak barrels after fermentation to add wood tannins and aromas. Red wine should be allowed to breathe and be served at room-temperature.
4. **Rose wines** are pink wines made from black grapes, they absorb very little tannin due to the brief contact with the dark skins. Some of them are also called "blush wines" and are sweeter in taste. These tend to be quite sweet wines, but drier rosé wines are also available. All rosés should be served chilled.
5. Traditional and regional "**old-world**" winemaking processes produce more elegant, tasting wines with less bold colours, whereas "**new-world**" wines are bolder in taste and colour, full of fruity aromas and more alcoholic.

Wine appellation

An appellation is a legally defined and protected geographical indication identifying where a wine's grapes are grown. Also cheeses and spirits have similar systems which legally identify where they are produced.

Variety of grapes, maximum grape yield and alcohol content are criteria for wine appellation.

The rules governing appellations usually depend on the regulations in the wine producing country, but there are also interstate agreements (those for European Union countries).

Non-European wines are usually classified by the predominant grape variety such as Pinot Noir or Chardonnay (varietal wines) with minimum legal requirements (usually between 75% and 90%), according to the laws governing the country of origin. Some blended wines have names under which they are marked and this appellation is governed by trademark laws rather than specific wine laws.

In contrast, European wine producers tend to classify their wines by region (Bordeaux, Rioja and Chianti) and do not usually have information about the grape variety on the wine label. In fact, European countries have wine laws that govern what kind of grapes can be used to make wine with the name of the region on the label (for ex. red wines from the Bordeaux region of France are made from Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc grapes). New world wine producers are adopting this practice.

Terroir is a French term which refers to the complete natural environment in which a particular wine is produced. The soil, sun exposure, wind, rain all determine the quality of a wine. Even neighbouring vineyards using the same grape varieties produce different wines.

EU wine labelling

According to the European union regulations, **wine without geographical designation** must carry the following **compulsory details** on the front label of the bottle:

- the country of origin;
- the blend of different grape variety;
- the bottler's details;
- the nominal volume;
- the alcohol content, expressed in percentage volume (by law must be less than 14%);
- a lot number and details of any sulphites (not necessary on the front label).

Optional items for non-geographical wines include:

- brand name;
- colour;
- residual sugar description.

Protected Geographical Indication (PPI) and Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) category wine must indicate the same **compulsory information** on the front label as wine without geographical designation. In addition to this, it should also show a geographical designation, a traditional expression and/or Protected Geographical Indication/Protected Designation of Origin on the front label.

Optional items on PPI or PDO wines include:

- trademarks or brand name;
- traditional terms;
- colour;
- wine variety and vintage (only if the wine is derived from at least 85% of the named vintage);
- residual sugar level for still wines;
- traditional terms such as “methods of production” and specific Member state terms.

Beer

Beer is an alcoholic beverage brewed from malted barley, hops, yeast and water, as well as other ingredients such as fruit, wheat and spices, which are sometimes used.

The yeast turns sugars in the malt into alcohol and the hops provide the bitter flavours and the flowery aroma in the beer.

type of beer	colour	strength	character	ingredients	taste
mild	dark brown	not very strong	less hopped than bitters	malts or barley	chocolate, nutty and burnt
India Pale Ale (IPA)	golden	medium	spicy, peppery, bitter	full of alcohol and hops	juicy malt, citrus fruits
bitter	deep bronze to copper	light to medium	spicy, peppery and grassy hop character	darker crystal malts	tangy fruit, juicy and nutty malt flavour
golden ales	pale amber, gold, yellow or straw-coloured	medium to strong	pale malt with undertones of tart citrus fruit, peppery hops	well-hopped	taste like biscuits
stouts	dark, brown or black	strong	hopped	roasted malt, dried fruit, coffee, liquorice	bitter, dry or sweet

				and molasses	
lager	light or dark	quite strong	hoppy or mild	malted barley or malted wheat	cleaner, subtler flavour

Craft beer and cider

Craft beer is artisan beer brewed by a small or independent company, known as a microbrewery that produces limited quantities of high quality beer using traditional brewing techniques.

Cider is an apple-based alcoholic beverage which is traditional in the UK and drunk in the summer months because of its sweet and refreshing taste.

Craft beer in the UK and in Italy

Once, **Britain** was one of the biggest brewing nations in the world, but production of craft beer decreased due to the competition and fierce marketing campaigns of mass-produced beers. Then, in 2002 a progressive beer tax was introduced in the UK, giving tax breaks to microbreweries and their production began to increase once more. Since then the choice, variety and popularity of craft beers has grown and new, innovative beers emerged from USA.

Nowadays there are over 800 microbreweries in the UK, producing excellent craft beers, from pilsners to golden ales to IPAs to porters to stouts. Here are some of the craft beers to look out for (Camden Pale, Stiff Upper Lip, Goldeneye pale Ale, O6 Porter).

Italy has also developed a growing reputation for its craft beers, particularly in the North of Italy where excellent craft beers are produced (Nora, Teo Musso).

Spirits and liqueurs

Spirits are essentially alcoholic beverages produced by fermenting grain, fruit or vegetables. They include:

- **brandy**: distilled from wine and then aged in wooden containers to deepen the colour, mellow the taste and add additional aromas and flavours. The word "brandy" comes from a Dutch word meaning "burnt wine". Brandies include: Cognac, Armagnac (French brandies), brandies distilled from grape pomace (Italian grappa), Kirsch (German brandy). Usually served alone, brandy is also used to flambé desserts;
- **gin**: pure distilled spirit, fermented from grain or molasses and flavoured with juniper and other aromatics. The name comes from the Dutch for juniper, *genever*. Dutch gins, known as "Hollands" are made from barley malt, English and American gins are distilled from malt wine while drier gins called "London dry" have more aromas and can be served unmixed or with other spirits in cocktails or long drinks (gin and tonic);
- **rum**: distilled molasses, it is clear before barrel-ageing and the addition of caramel. Originating in the West Indies in the 1600s, it was called *rumbullion*. Heavy, dark and full-bodied rums (oldest types from Jamaica, Barbados) are used in long drinks or desserts, the oldest, full-

bodied dark rums can be drunk alone while lighter ones tend to be used in cocktails;

- **vodka**: neutral, colourless spirit typical of Eastern Europe and distilled from cereals without a definite aroma or taste. Probably originated in Russia; the word comes from the Russian *voda*, meaning water. In Russia and Poland vodka is generally drunk unmixed and chilled as an aperitif, elsewhere it is mostly drunk in cocktail or long drinks;
- Scottish, Canadian, Irish or American **whisky** is distilled from cereal grains, oak-aged and sometimes flavoured with malt. The word comes from the Irish or Scots Gaelic for "water of life". The whisky produced in each country is distinctive because of the production, type of cereal grains and quality of the water used. Italy too (Trentino-Alto Adige) has recently started to produce its own triple malt whisky. Whisky is consumed both unmixed and mixed in cocktails or punches;
- **tequila**: made by distilling the juices of the blue agave plant. Originally made in the area surrounding the city of Tequila in Mexico. It has a very distinctive taste and it is usually served in cocktails or neat with lime and salt.

Liqueurs are strong, sweet alcoholic drinks flavoured with fruit, herbs or spices. Usually drunk on their own after meal, used in desserts, coffees or combined in cocktails. They include Kahlua, Baileys, Amaretto, Curacao and crème de cacao.

Herbal liqueurs, known as "amari" include **Jaegermeister**, made up with 50 different herbs, **Strega** with up to 70 herbs and spices and **Drambuie** made from whisky, honey and herbs.

Cocktails

A cocktail is an alcoholic drink consisting of a spirit or spirits mixed with other ingredients, such as fruit juice or cream. To make good cocktails it is important to learn the relationship between strong (vodka or gin) and weak (liqueurs or fortified wines) and sour (citrus fruits such as lemon or lime) and sweet (added sugar or syrups). Almost all cocktails consist of strong and sour, with weak and sweet added separately or together.

The most frequently used cocktail-making methods are the following:

- **shaking**: when you mix the cocktail by hand in a cocktail shaker, three quarters filled with ice cubes, not crushed ice;
- **stirring**: when you mix it with a long bar spoon in a mixing glass, before straining it into a glass;
- **blending**: when you mix fruit juices, alcohol, fruit in an electric blender until smooth;
- **building**: when you pour the ingredients directly into the glass you are serving the cocktail in.

Almost all the cocktails are decorated with some kind of fruit floating or on a cocktail stick; straws are essential in long cocktails; frosting is rubbing the rim of the glass in lemon or orange then submerging it in sugar, salt or cocoa.

Alcohol-free cocktails and long drinks

Mocktails are cocktails without alcohol and are the latest trend in clubs, bars and pubs. They are refreshing, colourful and tasty.

Long drinks are generally large, refreshing cold drinks often, but not necessarily, containing alcohol, mixed with a soft drink and served in tall glasses. They contain lots of ice and are often served in summer and garnished with herbs, fruit, rind and decorated with umbrellas and straws.

Juices, milkshakes and frappés

A **milkshake** is a cold, blended, frothy drink made of milk, a sweet flavouring and ice cream. It is called a milkshake because of shaking the milky ingredients together. Today milkshakes are considered a trendy, healthy drink to enjoy at a coffee house or café.

A **frappé** is a drink served with ice or frozen to a slushy consistency. It can be made with coffee, chocolate, juices, teas or any liquid ingredients.

Juice is a drink derived from fruit or vegetables. Unlike a smoothie, which is made in a blender and retains the pulp, juice is obtained with a juicer, which discards the pulp. Juice bars have become big business, as people are more health-conscious.

Happy hour

Happy hour is what in Italy we would term aperitif time, between 18.30 and 20.00, a time to relax after a hard day's work before returning home for dinner. In the UK, happy hour is the period of time, usually early evening, when bars and pubs drop their prices on drinks and especially cocktails.

Happy hour started in the early 19th century when the crews of American naval ships enjoyed boxing and wrestling matches or cabaret nights when docked in port. In the 1960s, happy hour became popular like aperitifs in Europe but in the 1980s several American states started to ban it to stop people drinking and driving. Nowadays the trend in North America and Northern Europe is to integrate tapas or finger food with early evening drinks as they do in Spain and Italy.

Hot drinks: tea and coffee

Tea is the world's famous beverage. It is much cheaper to produce than coffee and it is a versatile drink that you can serve hot or cold, with sugar, milk or lemon, or infused with fruit, herbs and spices.

It was probably first consumed 5.000 years ago in China and the Dutch first brought it to Europe at the end of the 16th century. Then, when Charles II of England married a passionate tea-drinker it quickly became Britain's favourite drink. Tea is classified according to how the leaves are processed. **Black tea** is the most popular, with its strong flavour and deep reddish colour and you find it in English breakfast tea blends. **Green tea** is milder and green to appearance, popular in China and Japan, and growing in popularity in Europe too. **Oolong tea** is a combination of black and green tea and has a fruity flavour. **White tea**, the rarest type of tea, has a delicate, soft taste and light colour.

Coffee is drunk all over America, Europe and in Asian countries too. It can be served in many different ways: hot or cold, with cream, milk or black, with or without sugar, caffeinated or decaffeinated, and even with a liqueur or spirit. The coffee-making process started in Arabia in the 13th century and coffee first came to Europe in the 1600s when the Dutch founded coffee estates in Sri Lanka and Java. During the 18th century European imported coffee commercially through Venice and coffee houses emerged across Italy and France. Coffee was initially prepared unfiltered, Turkish style, until the Viennese tried filtering and adding milk to it; in Milan, this coffee soon evolved into the espresso coffee: strong, full-bodied and filtered. Like wine, coffee quality is determined according to its growing conditions (heavy-bodied coffee from Sumatra, bright and sparkling coffee from Latin America, exotic and aromatic coffee from East African, floral and fruity coffee from Arabian Peninsula).

Serving at the bar

Welcoming customers

Bar staff need to be hosts, entertainers and public relations representatives of a bar.

It is important to greet customers with genuine warmth; when new customers walk into the bar and you are serving someone tell them you will serve them as soon as possible. When the bar is empty a bartender should busy himself with other tasks. A good bartender should make customers feel at home by learning regular customers' names and finding out what they like to drink. Learning to read customers' thoughts is the key to great customer service.

Making suggestions and describing

A good bartender makes suggestions and recommendations to their customers. To describe a drink to someone who has never tried it before you should make an objective description, by telling him which of the five main tastes is dominant in the drink: bitter, sour, sweet, salty, savoury or umami. Then, you should also give your subjective opinion and provide the customer with more information about the type of drink and when it is best consumed.

Serving drinks at the bar

When the bar is busy, a bartender should observe everything that is happening in order to guarantee the best service to customers. It is important to double-check the orders, to be courteous and pleasant to customers and to give them a positive experience at the bar. If it takes a long time to serve a customer, you should always apologise.

CASE STUDY

It's happy hour for cocktails!

Cocktails are apparently the new craze in London despite the fact that there is an ongoing recession. A survey of 500 men and 500 women found that Londoners prefer drinking cocktails to beer and that experiencing a cocktail bar is much preferred to sitting in the local pub.