

Harvest Moon Cocktail – Comfort du Jour

As with cooking, crafting a cocktail is easier when you have your ingredients and tools lined up and ready. For most whiskey-type drinks, I stir the ingredients together in a cocktail mixing glass. But today, I'm reaching for the shaker because the maple syrup is thick and heavy. I've also learned from a real bartender that dark liquors and citrus juices blend better when shaken. For best results, you'll also want a jigger or shot glass to measure your ingredients, and a spoon for adding the red wine layer.

There's a fussy science behind getting a crystal-clear ice cube, and I usually follow it, but this cocktail is meant to celebrate the Harvest Moon, so I wanted it to be white like the moon. I added a little lemonade to the water before freezing. Voila! I was surprised how much a difference it made in opacity, and I also found that the ice slipped out of the mold more easily. (Note to self: do this more often!)

INGREDIENTS

- 1.5 oz. rye (or bourbon)
- 1 Tbsp. smoked (or regular) maple syrup
- 2 tsp. freshly squeezed lemon juice
- large cocktail ice cube or sphere
- 1 oz. light, fruity red wine, such as pinot noir or tempranillo (double amount for a prettier layer)

INSTRUCTIONS

Combine rye, maple syrup and lemon juice in the cocktail shaker. Add regular mixing ice (about one cup) and shake heartily until the outside of the shaker is frosty. Strain the cocktail over your ice sphere into the glass.

For pretty (and easy) layering, lightly rest a spoon, back side up, just touching the ice, and slowly pour the wine over it. It helps to use a small cup with a spout, as you will have better control of the wine than you would have pouring it straight from the bottle. Don't be afraid to try this—and remember, even if the mixture blends together more than you intend, it will still taste delicious.