

Class 3

BARTENDING TERMINOLOGY

A lot of the terms and phrases listed below are standard throughout the industry. A good bartender will know the profession inside out and have the ability to understand various words related to all aspects of the hospitality industry. Our course offers extensive hands-on explaining the details of using these definitions.

ADD-ON- An extension or addition to a drink order.

ALCOHOL- A colorless liquid made from any grain, vegetable or fruit. It is the intoxicating ingredient in distilled and fermented beverages.

ALE- A beverage made from brewed and fermented malt and/or cereal. It is fuller bodied and more bitter than beer.

AMARETTO- An Italian liqueur made from a brandy base with a blend of almond, apricot and other ingredients.

ANISETTE- A sweet, mild liqueur with the flavor of Anise (licorice). The principal flavor ingredient is the Anise seed. It comes in both red and colorless.

APERITIF- A French word meaning "Appetizer". It has a wine base and a low alcoholic content. This beverage is served before meals to stimulate the appetite.
Examples: Dubonnet, Vermouth

APPLE JACK- A brandy distilled from the juice of apples (also called Apple Brandy). It is an American product, the French version being Calvados.

APRICOT FLAVORED BRANDY- A fine brandy infused with extracts of ripe apricots it is golden brown in color and bottled at no less than 70 proof.

B&B- A Liqueur blended with Benedictine and Cognac. It's less sweet than Benedictine.

BACARDI- A Brand of Cuban or Puerto Rican rum, usually light bodied, dry and with only a slight molasses flavor. Comes in light and dark (dark being a bit sweeter).

BANK Operating cash - usually locked and counted by the establishment. The money with which you start.

BAR MIXES- Same as Sour Mix. See sour mix in this section.

BAR-TRAY- Round tray with a skid resistant surface used to bring several beverages or items to a table.

BARBACK- Bartender's assistant that is responsible for drawing beer, pouring wine, making change, ringing up checks and stocking.

BARLEYMALT- The sprouted barley, or barley-malt, contains the enzymes that convert grain starch into fermented sugar.

BEER- A product obtained from controlled fermentation of malt and water alone, or malt and additives such as corn, rice or sugar. It is boiled with hops (or flavoring) prior to fermentation. Almost all beers sold in the U.S. are of this type.

BEHIND YOU- When behind a person, say this to inform them of your presence.

BENEDICTINE- One of the world's first fine liqueurs, made in France by the Benedictine Monks in the 16th century. This Cognac based liqueur contains a variety of herbs, roots, flowers, bark and other secret ingredients.

BITTERS- A blend of aromatics made from numerous and subtle combinations of roots, barks, berries and herbs. Bitters is characterized by a bitter taste, it is used in mixing drinks, or as aperitifs, liquors or digestive. The best-known brand is Angostura orange bitters.

BLACKBERRY FLAVORED BRANDY- Fine brandy infused with extracts of fresh, ripe blackberries. It has a deep purple color and is bottled at no less than 70 proof. Be concerned with fruit flies with all brandies.

BLEND- To mix a single drink from two or more liquids.

BLENDED WHISKEY- A distilled spirit made from at least 20 percent 100 proof straight whiskey. It is blended either with other whiskey or neutral spirits or both, and bottled at no less than 80 proof.

BOCK BEER- A strong, dark, sweet beer, brewed in the spring from the residue left in the vats just before they are cleaned each year.

BOILERMAKER- A beer with a shot poured into the beer.

BOX- Pour into and out of a shaker, usually only once. Gives the drink a quick mixing without shaking.

BONDED- Straight whiskey, usually bourbon or rye that is at least four years old and bottled at 100 proof under U.S. government supervision.

BOURBON- Whiskey distilled in the U.S. from grains. The U.S. government specifies that 51% or more of the grain mixture used must be corn and it must be run off the still at 160 proof or less. Bottled proof may be no less than 80. Usually made in Kentucky. Examples: Wild Turkey, Old Granddad

BRANDY- Distilled from fermented mash of grapes or other fruits. These brandies are aged in oak casks and are usually bottled at 80 proof. Brandy, long enjoyed as an after dinner drink, is also widely used in cooking.

CACHACA- A Brazilian spirit made from juice of sugar cane. Drink "Caipirinha".

CALL LIQUOR- A particular specified brand of any liquor requested by the customer.

CALLING ORDER- Systematic order for "Calling-In" drinks to the bartender.

CALVADOS- A French apple brandy distilled in Calvados, France, from which it gets its name.

CANADIAN WHISKEY- A light-bodied blend of whiskeys usually distilled from rye, corn and barley. Produced only in Canada, under government supervision, most Canadian whiskeys sold in U.S. are at least 4 years old.

CHARTREUSE- A green and yellow liquor that is one of France's greatest. It is a brandy base cordial and distilled with a combination of herbs, roots, bark, flowers, spices and fruits. The formula is highly secret. The famous green Chartreuse, which is 110 proof, contains some 130 different ingredients. The yellow chartreuse, which is lighter and sweeter and now marketed in the U.S. at 86 proof, contains some 120 different ingredients.

CHASER Mixes such as: Coke, 7-up & soda water that is served with the drink, but in a separate glass. Chasers can also be alcoholic such as a "beer chaser" with a shot.
Example: Boiler-maker

CHERRY FLAVORED BRANDY- A fine brandy infused with extracts of ripe cherries. It is a rich, deep, burgundy red color and is bottled at no less than 70 proof.
Examples: Singapore Sling and Fireballs

CLEAR- To remove all remaining silverware, dishes, and bar glasses from the bar.

COCKTAIL- A term used by the general public and having several different meanings. Most people believe that the word "cocktail" originated during the American Revolution. There was a tavern in New York run by Betsy Flannigan who decorated her back bar with rooster tail feathers. When soldiers came in to the bar, they would ask for something with which to stir their drinks. Betsy would reach back, pull one of the feathers and give it to the soldiers so they could stir their drinks with it.

COGNAC- A fine brandy made from grapes grown in the region of Cognac France. Cognac is known for its smoothness and heavy, dry aroma. The French government protects the name and no other brandy distilled elsewhere may be called Cognac, regardless of the quality.

COINTREAU- A proprietary name of a sweet, colorless liqueur, made with a brandy base and flavored with peels of oranges grown in the West Indies. Similar products under other brands are known as Triple Sec, meaning triple dry.
Examples: Sidecar, Margaritas

CONGENERS- The oils, esters and traces of acid found in newly distilled grain spirits. The amounts of congeners are controlled by the proof at which the spirit is distilled. The aging process in charcoal barrels further removes them. Some congeners must remain, as they constitute the natural flavor of the whiskey.

CORDIAL- See Liqueur.

CREAN DRINK- Any cocktail made with cream as one of the ingredients.

CREME DE CACAO- A dark brown or clear sweet-chocolate-flavored liqueur made of cocoa beans.

CREME DE CASSIS- A deep burgundy colored liqueur made of black currants, it is of lower proof than most liqueurs and makes a fine aperitif when mixed with either sweet or dry vermouth.

CREME DE MENTHE- A delicious, cool mint-tasting liqueur made from fresh mint and peppermint leaves. The most popular is the green Crème De Menthe. Though, it also comes in white (or clear), gold and rose. It is the most popular of all the liqueurs.

Examples: Crème De Menthe Frappes. Grasshopper & the Stinger)

CURACAO- A brandy- based liqueur flavored with the distillation of the dried peel of green oranges grown on the Island of Curacao. It is similar to Triple Sec, but not as highly refined. Curacao has the flavor of oranges and is amber in color. However, there is also Blue Curacao, which tastes identical but is simply blue in color.

DISTILLATION- The process of reducing the water content of alcoholic liquids so that they contain a greater proportion of alcohol. It requires heating the liquid until the alcohol boils and vaporizes. These vapors are caught, cooled, and condensed into liquid.

DOUBLE- Usually two shots of liquor or two portions of a particular cocktail. It should be served in an oversized glass.

DRAMBUIE- A reasonably dry liqueur with a scotch base, flavored with heather honey from Scotland amber in color. Example: Rusty Nail.

DRAW- Pouring draft beers from a tap.

DRY- Not sweet. A term used to describe wines and other drinks.

DRY, VERY DRY, EXTRA DRY- Usually refers to Martinis and Manhattans where the absolute minimum of vermouth is desired.

DUBONNET- An aperitif that is wine flavored with herbs. Originally a red wine and made in France, but now is also made as blonde or white Dubonnet that has a slight quinine taste.

EIGHTY-SIX- This means decline further service of drinks.

FACING- Carrying bills in hand, face-up, and according to denomination.

FERMENTATION- A process by which yeast acts on sugar, converting it first into alcohol and carbon dioxide gas and then, unless it is protected from the air, into vinegar. This process is basic to the making of all alcoholic beverages.

FLAG- Orange slice and cherry speared together.

FLOATING OR LAYERING- When one liqueur is poured slowly over another so they do not mix together.

FORTIFIED WINE- A wine with brandy added.

FOYER- Front entrance, lobby, or waiting room.

FRAPPE- A "liqueur" mist served on packed crushed ice but without a twist and served in a cocktail glass.

GALLIAINO- A superior yellow Italian liqueur, bottled in a distinctive tall bottle and with a mild spicy flavor. It enjoys particular popularity here in the U.S., perhaps due to the introduction of the Harvey Wall-banger.

GARNISH- Bar food placed on or in a drink.

Examples: cherry, olive, onion, and lime wedge, lemon peel

GIN- Most often colorless, it is distilled from neutral spirits and receives its flavor and aroma from juniper berries, coriander and other ingredients. Gins sold around the world at 80 proof are bottled in this country at proofs varying from 80 to 94.

GRAND MARNIER- A French liqueur made from Cognac, West Indies orange peel and other ingredients. Grand Marnier has a vague similarity to Curacao, but is quite distinctive and enjoys a very high reputation.

GRENAINE- Bright red, sweet, non-alcoholic syrup made from pomegranate and raspberries. It is used principally for flavoring cocktails and mixed drinks.

Example: Shirley Temple

GUN- Automated dispenser that pours all the mixes required in many drinks. Usually: Coke, 7-up, tonic & soda water. Many establishments have automated liquor guns that pour measured amounts of liquor rather than out of the bottles.

HEAD- 20% foam on the top of a draft or bottled beer.

HIGHBALL- A combination of well liquor and gun mixes or juices.

Examples: 7&7, scotch & water, gin & tonic

HOUSE- A generic brand of product poured when not specified to be a premium brand (inexpensive alcoholic products).

"IN THE WEEDS" - An expression when bartenders can't keep up with the orders and fall behind in service.

HYDROMETER- An instrument used to measure the proof of alcoholic beverages.

INFUSION- One of the methods used in the making of cordials. Aromatic ingredients are steeped in neutral spirits or brandy.

IRISH MIST- A liqueur made from an Irish whiskey base and flavored with honey, herbs and other ingredients.

IRISH WHISKEY- Produced only in Ireland, it is blended whiskey containing both barley malt and grain whiskeys. It is processed similarly to scotch, but heavier and more full-bodied than scotch and is usually 86 proof.

JAMAICAN RUM- Heavy-bodied rum produced on the island of Jamaica from sugar cane molasses and other by-products of sugar cane. Rum may vary from light amber to almost black in color and proof may vary from 80 to 151.

Example: Myers Dark Rum

KAHLUA- Mexican coffee liqueur made from coffee beans, cocoa beans, vanilla beans and brandy. It is dark brown in color and has a low proof.

Examples: Black Russian, Toasted Almond

KUMMEL- Originally made in Germany and Switzerland from coriander, anise and caraway seeds. It has the distinctive flavor of the caraway seed. The word kummel means caraway and it is a rather sweet, colorless liqueur.

LACE- Normally applies to the last ingredient in a recipe, meaning to pour onto the top of the drink.

LAST CALL- The notice given to customers prior to bar closing time.

LIQUEUR/CORDIAL- An alcoholic beverage produced by combining a spirit (usually brandy) with fruits, flowers, herbs, seeds, roots, plants or juices to which sweetening has been added. Practically all liqueurs are sweet and colorful, with a highly concentrated dessert-like flavor and are usually served after meals. Remember that the words 'liqueur' and 'cordial' are synonymous.

Examples: B & B, Grand Marnier, Galliano, Kahlua.

LIQUOR- A distilled spirit: Vodka, gin, rum, tequila, whiskey, brandy and tequila. In American usage, it means spirits.

LIQUOR ROOM- The storage area for liquor and bar items.

LITER-½ LITER- Decanter used in serving house wines.

LOWBOY- A small candle in a glass used throughout the restaurant.

MASH- In whiskey making, mash is grain that is steeped in hot water to change its starch into sugar.

METAXA- A Greek brandy with a slightly resinous flavor.

MIST- Any liquor served on crushed ice with a twist. Served in a rocks glass.

MIXES- Products such as Coke, ginger ale, 7-up, soda, tonic (quinine water), usually served with liquor. Anything other than the liquor or cordial is usually a garnish or a mix.

MUDDLE- A wooden bar utensil used to mash or crush garnishes, bitters, and sugar in a rocks glass.

NEAT- Term used when pouring liquor directly into the glass (Never chilled or strained).

NEUTRAL SPIRIT- A practically tasteless, colorless alcohol distilled from grain, like whiskey, but at 190 proof or above, where as whiskey must be distilled at less than 190 proof. Neutral spirits are used in blended whiskeys and in the making of gin, vodka, and many other types of liquor.

NIGHTCAP- A wine or liquor taken before bedtime.

NUTMEG- The typical garnish for frozen and coffee drinks. This spice is sprinkled on top of the whip cream, on request only, which enhances the overall taste and appearance.

ON AND OVER- A drink made in the blender or mixer and then poured over ice (rocks).

ON THE ROCKS- Served over ice cubes.

ORGEAT- non-alcoholic almond-flavored syrup used principally in the making of Polynesian drinks.

OUZO- A Greek brandy with anisette flavor.

PARTY- A particular group of customers.

PEPPERMINT SCHNAPPS- A peppermint-flavored liqueur similar to white Crème De Menthe, but lighter in body and drier in taste.

PERNOD- A French anise-flavored liqueur and absinthe substitute. Pernod is used as an aperitif and as an ingredient in some cocktails.

PICKS- Used in spearing olives, onions, and flags.

PICK-ME-UP- A drink designed to relieve the effects of overindulgence in alcohol.

PILSNER- A light, lager type of beer.

PORTA BAR- Small self-contained bar on rollers. Used to serve in a foyer or any area.

PORTER- Rich, sweet ale with a heavy foam, darker and thicker than stout.

PREMIUM- A brand of product specifically asked for that carries a premium price (expensive alcoholic beverages).

PROOF- System of measuring the alcoholic content of spirits. In the U.S. proof is double the percent of alcohol.

Example: a whiskey marked '86 proof' is 43% alcohol

REACH-IN- Small refrigerator, usually 2-3 doors on back bar where all juices, garnishes and mixes are stored for access for the bartenders.

ROCK AND RYE- Are Rye whiskey sweetened with rock candy and fruit juice. May have slices of fruit or crystals of rock candy in the product.

RUM- An alcoholic distillate produced from the fermented juice of sugar cane, cane syrup and molasses and bottled at no less than 80 proof. Most rum are blends of several aged rums. Ranging from heavy pungent types, to light brandy-like varieties selected for special aroma, flavor and color. There are two main types of rum: light-bodied dry with only a very slight molasses flavor and heavy-bodied darker which is sweeter and more pungent.

RYE WHISKEY- Distilled from a mash of grain containing not less than 51% rye. It is much like bourbon in color, but it is different in taste and heavier in flavor.

SANGRIA- A tall chilled and sweetened red wine or brandy laced with triple sec poured over ice with a splash ginger ale or 7up and marinade fruit. Served in a tall glass with ice.

SCOTCH WHISKEY- Produced only in Scotland, scotch whiskeys are blended whiskeys deriving their individual personalities from native barley grain and traditional pot stills. All scotch blends contain malt and grain whiskeys. Their distinctive smoked flavor comes from drying malted barley over peat fires. All the scotch imported into this country is at least four years old and is usually 80 to 86 proof.

SERVICE BAR- The bar that is used by the dining room cocktail waitress only.

SHERRY- A wine that is characterized by its "nutty" flavor. It ranges in color from pale to dark amber and is made either extra dry, dry, medium dry or sweet. The sweet type is sometimes called "cream" or "golden" sherry.

SHOOTER- Same as a shot, but most of the time served chilled.

SIDE OR BACK- Any non-alcoholic beverage served in addition to an alcoholic beverage.

SIMPLE SYRUP- Made with half sugar / half hot water. Used for replacement of sugar because there is no dissolving involved.

SLOE GIN- Not really a gin but a liqueur distilled from sloe berries. It is a rich, deep red in color. *Sloe*-berries are a type of plum that comes from the blackthorn bush.
Example: Sloe Gin Fizz

SWIZZLE- A tall, traditionally rum-based cocktail & fill with cracked ice. A stirring rod or swizzle stick is quickly rotated between the palms of the hands to form frost on the glass.

TEQUILA- A distilled spirit of Mexico made from the fermented juice of the maguey plant (base or heart). Only Mexico may bear the name; elsewhere the spirit is known as mescal.

TIA MARIA- An extremely popular Jamaican liqueur, not rum-based, but made from a rectified cane sugar distillate. Flavored with a concentrate of the famous blue mountain coffee.

TRIPLE SEC- An alcohol-based, triple distilled, colorless liqueur made from the Dutch West Indies orange peel. It has an orange flavor.

Examples: Sidecar, Margarita, Ice Teas, Kamikazes.

TWIST- A sliced piece of lemon peel usually 2 inches in length placed in certain cocktails. Refer to Garnishes for illustrations and preparations.

UP / STRAIGHT UP- Cocktails & shots are stirred and chilled then strained into a glass. Usually means “no ice.”

VANDERMINT- A chocolate liqueur flavored with peppermint.

VERMOUTH- White appetizer wine flavored with as many as thirty to forty different herbs, roots, berries, flowers and seeds. There are two varieties: dry (French) is light gold in color and has a delightful nutty flavor and sweet (Italian) is rich in flavor and more syrupy. Both are delicate and will lose their freshness if left too long in an unopened bottle.

Examples: Gibson, Martini, Manhattan, Rob Roy

VIRGIN- Means drinks served without alcohol.

Example: Shirley Temple

VODKA- Most versatile of all alcoholic beverages, it is a highly refined and filtered liquor distilled at or above 190 proof bottled at not less than 80 or more than 110 proof. It was originally made in Russia from potatoes, but in the U.S. vodka is usually distilled from grain and wheat. Vodka is not aged, is colorless, odorless, and virtually tasteless.

SOUR MIX- Same as bar mix. Derived from a concentrate and mixed with water, tasting similar to lemonade. Used in all Collins drinks, Margaritas, and Long Island Ice Teas.

SOUTHERN COMFORT- An American-made liquor with a bourbon base and containing peach and other fruit flavors.

SPEED RACK- Metal container that generally holds all of the "bar or house" liquors; located directly below the station.

SPLASH- Just a small amount (touch) of mix added to a drink.

STAND-UP BAR- Area in the lounge for customers to stand while drinking.

STATION- Your particular work area.

STEGRA- A delicious liqueur imported from Italy. Stegra is made with citrus, various herbs and spices and with a delicate anise flavor. It is light amber in color.

STIR STICKS Smaller and thinner than tall straws, and placed in most drinks to enhance the overall presentation.

STOCK- To prepare or replenish a reserve supply of an item.

STOUT- A very dark, sweet English ale with a strong malt flavor.

STRAIGHT UP- Any drink or liquor served without ice or with the ice strained out.

TODDY- A sweetened drink of liquor and hot water, often with spices and served in a tall glass.

TALL- Any drink served in taller glasses than highball glasses. Examples: Alabama Slammer. Blue Hawaiian, and Ice teas.

VOUCHER- The standard credit card form.

V.S. / V.S.O.P.- Means the categorizing of certain types of brandies or cognacs. Initials stand for Very Special and Very Superior Old Pale. See liqueurs and cordials section.

WALK-IN- Refrigerator located in kitchen area.

WATER BACK- Glass of water served with the drink.

WEDGE- A triangular segment of lime.

WELL LIQUOR- Bourbon, Scotch, Vodka, Gin, Rum, Brandy or Tequila poured when the brand is not specified.

WELL STATION- Where the bartender prepares drinks.

WELL / POUR LIQUOR- Liquors used when guest does not specify brand. Examples: Bourbon and water, scotch and soda, vodka on the rocks.

WHEEL- A round slice of lime.

WHISKEY- The general name for liquor of not less than 80 proof. Distilled from the mash of grain.

WINE- Beverage made from the fermented juice of grapes or occasionally from the juice of other fruit or even flowers like dandelions.