

FLAVOR FULL

BY ROBIN SCHEMPP

Deploying many flavor tricks—natural fruit juices and botanical spirits, flavored cordial or syrup additions, aromatic bitters, special rims and garnishes—this spring fling of a cocktail demonstrates how to build a highly flavored drink. Consider these tips and tricks for making modifications and additions for your own creation.

CHERRY BLOSSOM

2 oz. Tart cherry juice
(no sugar added)
1 oz. Fresh lemon juice
½ oz. Maraschino liqueur
½ oz. Elderflower cordial
1 ½ oz. Botanical gin
Dash of cherry bitters
Almond or date sugar
Luxardo cherry
Unsprayed cherry blossom
(optional)

While chilling a cocktail glass, build cocktail in an ice-filled shaker. Shake well and strain into sugar-rimmed glass. Add cherry and blossom garnish.

CORDIALS

Flavored cordials are the modifiers here and can change both the theme and flavor. Vanilla or almond pair well with cherry. Kirsch or cherry eau de vie will lend more fruit and less sweetness, while ginger or pimento dram change the drink from floral to spicy. For your own flavoring, replace one or both cordials with flavored simple syrup.

JUICE

Sophisticated, all-natural, no-sugar-added juices impart flavor without too much lengthening. Meanwhile, sparkling juices can make for an interesting and festive cocktail (in this case, build from the bottom up and finish with the juice).

BITTERS

Bitters work well in juice-based cocktails, but a cherry or floral spice will add even more aromatic fruit or blossom flavor.

GARNISH

Date sugar or sugar spiked with almond extract and applied with lime juice to the rim will make this drink off-sweet. Cocktail cherries are making a comeback, including: syrupy, naturally preserved maraschinos; glossy, dry, black Amarens; locally grown varieties; and booze-spiked or even pickled versions. It pays to choose one that makes this cocktail compelling, with or without a blossom.