

The Steve: World's. Best. Martini.

I've had complaints about the length of this recipe. So, ok, for those who can't be bothered with perfection, here you go. But you don't get to call it a "Steve":

3 ounces of good gin and half an ounce of dry vermouth shaken with ice then strained into a martini glass and served with an olive on a toothpick.

There.

For a "Steve" you need to pay attention. Perfection requires sacrifice. Buckle up...

Martinis are made of gin, dry vermouth, whatever water the ice gives up, and garnish speared on a pick. Nothing else.

Preferred garnish for the Steve is 2 cocktail onions and 2 pimento stuffed green olives.

Martinis are shaken with ice (not stirred - yes it matters), then served "up", strained over the garnish.

There is no such thing as a martini on the rocks. There is no such thing as a vodka martini. There is no such thing as "dirty" martini. Pour olive juice into the drink and it's not a martini any more. Save your breath — I am not entertaining alternative opinions.

Gin is the last liquor you want to go cheap with. The cheap stuff is nasty, and that is not snobbery.

If you don't already have a favorite premium gin, try Hendrick's. If you can't find that, Bombay Sapphire. Then I guess Tanqueray or regular Bombay, but they are both a step down from the first two. Go much cheaper than that and it's a cliff. If you think you enjoy Beefeaters or Gordons or anything that comes in a plastic bottle, please at least try a top shelf gin one time. If you're drinking enough gin that the cost really makes a difference you may have issues beyond the scope of this humble tome.

No need to go fancy with your dry vermouth. Gallo or Martini & Rossi are fine.

A martini has only one correct ratio of gin to vermouth — 6:1. That is the magical sweet spot.

More vermouth and the taste is just... odd. Less and there isn't enough vermouth to "heal" the gin, taming the devils and teasing the angels to come out and play. People who think asking for a dry martini (meaning less vermouth than 6;1) is "classy" are misinformed. This also is not up for debate.

Directions:

Retrieve your all metal or metal and glass cocktail mixer set from the freezer (where it should normally be stored) and fill it halfway with crushed ice, then a few cubes. Filled about half to 2/3rds is perfect. Return to the freezer.

It matters that you use a metal mixer — something to do with ions. Whatever it is, martinis mixed in just glass or (gack!) plastic are missing something.

Swirl half an ounce of dry vermouth in your martini glass, then pour it into a jigger. Place the moistened

martini glass in the freezer.

Add 3 ounces of gin to the jigger.

Spear a cocktail olive or two and a cocktail onion or two on a martini pick (cool or retro picks are worth extra points). DO NOT use olives stuffed with novelty bits like anchovy, jalapeno, garlic cloves, blue cheese, etc. Pimento or nothing.

You may skip the onion if your audience prefers, and even substitute something else so long as it doesn't introduce a bizarre novelty flavor or appearance that distracts from the essential perfection you are about to achieve.

Place the loaded pick in the jigger along with the gin/vermouth and place in the refrigerator.

Then wait.

How long depends on your setup... more on that later. I wait about 10 minutes with my setup.

Remove all of the above from the fridge and freezer, place the pick in the martini glass, pour the gin/vermouth mix into the metal shaker with the ice, and shake vigorously 60 times. Yes, 60. This is where a lot of the magic happens. A little casual one-handed shaking won't cut it. We're talking two handed over-the-shoulder serious shaking.

Strain the liquid into the glass and serve immediately. The first sip MUST come while the raft of tiny ice chips is still visible on the surface. A curse on anyone who orders one of these then wanders off, neglecting their first cold sip duties. The artist deserves to see that look on their face and hear the little involuntary soft-porn moan.

Rinse, dry and store your shaker set in the freezer for next time.

Notes:

In addition to the use of good ingredients in the right ratio, there are 2 key variables that must be controlled to achieve perfection:

- the final temperature of the liquid (must be shockingly cold).
- the amount of ice that melts into it during preparation

Perfection demands a narrow range of each. The major variables are the starting temperature of the gin, and something that many don't think about - the starting temperature of the ice.

Ice in the freezer section of your fridge/Freezer, or in your ice maker, may be around zero to 10°F. A chest freezer may be as cold as -20°F.

Bar ice is often warmer. Motel "guest" ice from the machine is the worst - it melts when you look at it. If you shake room temperature gin in that ice an extremely watery martini will result.

Disaster.

You can go too far in the other direction. If you store your gin in the fridge or freezer and shake it in -20°F ice using a shaker stored in the freezer, it will be so cold that it thickens. Some of the gin's water will bond with

the ice, and stay in the shaker, leaving an unpleasantly sharp and strong martini.

Bottom line, If you are stuck with warm ice then store your gin in the fridge and you should be fine. If you have good cold ice, then start with room temp gin. Some experimentation may be in order.

My setup uses room temp gin, and crushed ice which I load into my already freezer cold metal shaker, and chill in a -14°F freezer for about 10 minutes before shaking. It comes out perfect, but you will need to tune your own setup. If you've done it all correctly an instant-read thermometer in the finished product should read around 14°-18°F.

It may take a little trial and error, but the correct balance triggers a reflexive smile, not the grimace that comes with a too-strong martini, or the blah disappointment that comes with one that is watered down.

Now that you are on the road to perfection, here are some recommended accoutrements:

- [amazon.com/dp/B0028U93RQ](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0028U93RQ) (best picks evar...)
- [Wine Enthusiast Steady-Temp Martini Glasses](#) (not the prettiest, but for function it is simply the ultimate martini glass. It gives the martini a fighting chance to stay cold all the way to the end. Careful though - they are a little delicate. Hand wash only.
- [amazon.com/dp/B000M1MUGK](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B000M1MUGK) (best style of shaker - metal and glass. Store them in the freezer.)

There is no need for thanks, though some have named children after me — which is permissible.

Martini wisdom:

One is just right, two is too many, and three is not enough.

— **James Thurber**

The martini: the only American invention as perfect as the sonnet.

— **H. L. Mencken**

Happiness is a dry martini and a good woman ... or a bad woman.

— **George Burns**

I like to drink martinis.

One or Two at the most.

Three and I'm under the table,

Four and I'm under the host.

— **Dorothy Parker**