

Bourbon Is My Comfort Food

Heather Wibbels

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Heather Wibbels's *Bourbon Is My Comfort Food* is a beautiful, detailed guide to making and enjoying bourbon cocktails.

Wibbels notes that many classic cocktails are made with bourbon, including Old Fashioneds, Manhattans, bourbon sours, and mint juleps. She explains how to make the best concoctions, considering each of the elements (bourbon, bitters, flavorings, and even ice) to make sure each is ideal for the drink.

Beyond the basics of each beverage, variations range from an oatmeal cookie-infused Old Fashioned to a Derby Day breakfast julep made with coffee, orange liqueurs, and maple syrup. While some of these combinations sound far-fetched, the idea isn't to hide the taste of bourbon, but to highlight it, pulling out flavors already found in each bottle forward, including citrus, spice, and heat.

Some recipes call for particular types of bourbon; many suggest brands for products like bitters and liqueurs. Those new to mixing will be able to confidently stir up their first drinks. Further, the book inspires experimentation with its tasting lab exercises for trying different kinds of bourbon sours (classic, Boston, and New York style), or making highballs with different carbonation sources, syrups, and liqueurs.

The book's detailed chapters on bar tools and shopping for bourbon, spirits, and mixers will help when it comes to starting with the right products. Its tips on tasting, garnishing, making simple syrups and infused bourbons, and developing unique cocktails aim to build confidence and encourage developing one's personal style. Recipes submitted by Bourbon Women members and winners of its recipe contest round out the options, showcasing ingredients and bourbons from around the United States.

Bourbon Is My Comfort Food is a gateway to exploring and enjoying different flavor combinations that pair well with bourbon in both classic and unexpected ways.

SARAH WHITE (May / June 2022)

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