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Anyone?**



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CHOW

Pucker punch

**A refreshing
option for
summer
parties**

How does the saying go? If life gives you lemons, mix them with tequila? Or was it vodka? Let me check my Dale Carnegie book. (Fun fact: The proverbial phrase did not originate with the famed self-help author to whom it's often attributed; rather it first appeared in the 1915 obituary of dwarf

story and
photo by
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actor and sketch artist Marshall Pinckney Wilder, in which Christian-anarchist author/artist Elbert Hubbard wrote: "He picked up the lemons that Fate had sent him and started a lemonade stand." The truth is sometimes stranger, and always better.)

The answer, of course, is that lemons make pretty much everything they touch better. This is especially true for many of the staples of summer—iced tea, lemonade, sorbet, marinade for grilled meats, garnish for fish, and a wide range of refreshing adult beverages. With summer temperatures flirting with 100 degrees in recent days, I've been focused mostly on that last item. As much as I enjoy a good margarita outdoors during the summer, I want a less-sweet evening chiller, and have endeavored to create a lemonade-style cocktail to meet that craving.

After some web-searching for inspiration and a few rounds of tests, I've settled on an unfussy yet delicious—too delicious,

probably—combo of lemon, honey and vodka.

I also reached out to local mixologist and Duffy's Tavern manager Scott Barwick to find out his approach to adult lemonade. He told me that the bartenders there simply mix together 2 ounces of vodka and an ounce each of freshly squeezed lemon juice and simple syrup, shake it with ice and then add soda water for a punch-like twist on the drink.

Barwick also suggested that one could make it "with an oleo-saccharum as a base, which is how most traditional punches are made." Starting by mixing citrus peels with sugar and letting it sit long enough for the wonderful oils to release into a fragrant syrup would be a pro move, but if you're not patient enough for that, a basic lemonade-with-booze cocktail is sufficiently refreshing. Below is my tart rendition, plus a less-stiff punch option. If you're tooth is sweeter, switch my 2:3:2 ratio of syrup, citrus, vodka to equal parts.

Pucker Punch

2 cups honey simple syrup
3 cups fresh-squeezed citrus
(half lime, half lemon)

2 cups vodka (preferably Tito's)
Lemon and lime slices for garnish (optional)
Soda/sparkling water (optional)

For honey simple syrup: mix 1 cup honey and 1 cup water in a small saucepan over medium heat, stirring till dissolved, Pour into a jar and let cool. (Tip: for general simple syrup purposes, mix equal parts honey and warm water in a squeeze bottle and shake till combined.)

Juice eight large lemons and 16 limes (for 12 ounces of each).

For a pitcher of cocktails, stir together the syrup, citrus juice and vodka, and serve by pouring into 16-ounce glasses filled to the top with ice. Garnish with lemon and/or lime slices if desired. Makes eight cocktails.

For a punch, stir together the syrup, citrus juice and vodka, add a bunch of ice and 36 ounces of soda or sparkling water (lemon La Croix perhaps?) in a big pitcher (or a punch bowl, or a cooler with a spout), then float a bunch of lemon and/or lime slices on top. Serve immediately in 6-ounce cups (before you lose carbonation or the ice melts). Makes approximately 12 servings. □

