

## Chapter 3

# Setting Up Your Home Bar

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### *In This Chapter*

- ▶ Thinking logistically when you set up your bar
  - ▶ Purchasing the right products
  - ▶ Figuring out how much to buy
- .....

**W**hen doing any sort of entertaining, one of the biggest hassles is trying to figure out how to set up your bar and how much liquor you need to buy. If you throw parties all the time, or if you're trying to plan just one big party, this chapter can help.

## *Some Logistical Advice*

Before I get into what and how much to buy, I'd like to provide some tips on how to set up a bar.

### *Directing traffic flow*



Keep the bar as far as possible from your food and snacks. Doing so prevents large groups of people from staying in one area. If possible, base a wine and beer bar in one area and a cocktail bar in another.

### *Keeping your bar in or near the kitchen*



Cleaning up spills is much easier in your kitchen. What's more, you do less running around when you're close to the sink and refrigerator. If you have to set up your bar in another

location, put a small rug or cloth under and behind the bar to protect the floor or carpet. And no matter where your bar is, use a strong, steady table to avoid tipping or collapsing.



## *Serving smartly*

Your party will run smoothly and your guests will be happy if you take the following suggestions to heart:

- ✔ Use nothing larger than a shot glass for shots, and don't serve doubles to your guests. You aren't doing anyone any favors by overserving. If a recipe calls for 1½ oz. of vodka, use just that amount. No mixed drink should exceed 2 oz. of liquor.
- ✔ Use lower-proof products if they're available. (See Chapter 5 for an explanation of *proof*.)
- ✔ Have punch available for those "light" drinkers.
- ✔ Have alcohol-free drinks available, including coffee and tea.
- ✔ Use only clean, fresh ice, and fresh fruit.
- ✔ If possible, chill glasses and don't put them out until five minutes before the party begins.
- ✔ When serving hot drinks, make sure that the cups or glasses have handles.
- ✔ Use a scoop, tongs, or a large spoon to serve ice. Never use your hands.
- ✔ If you don't have bottle pourers, rub wax paper over the tip of liquor bottles to prevent dripping.
- ✔ Close the bar 1 to 1½ hours before the end of the party.
- ✔ If possible, hire a professional bartender.

## *What You Need to Buy*

When setting up your home bar, always use popular name brands. These brands aren't always the most expensive, but they tend to be the most recognizable.

## *The basic setup*

A basic bar setup for your home and for spur-of-the-moment entertaining should consist of the following:

- ✔ One 750 ml bottle of the aperitif of your choice (Campari, Dubonnet, Lillet, and so on)
- ✔ One 750 ml bottle of sparkling wine or champagne
- ✔ Four 750 ml bottles of white domestic wine
- ✔ Two 750 ml bottles of red domestic wine
- ✔ One 750 ml bottle of dry vermouth
- ✔ One 750 ml bottle of sweet vermouth
- ✔ One 750 ml bottle of flavored vodka (stick to orange, lemon, raspberry, or vanilla flavor)
- ✔ One 750 ml bottle of vodka (domestic or imported)
- ✔ One 750 ml bottle of gin (domestic or imported)
- ✔ One 750 ml bottle of rum
- ✔ One 750 ml bottle of Scotch
- ✔ One 750 ml bottle of single-malt Scotch
- ✔ One 750 ml bottle of whiskey (domestic or imported)
- ✔ One 750 ml bottle of bourbon
- ✔ One 750 ml bottle of tequila
- ✔ One 750 ml bottle of brandy or cognac
- ✔ Twelve 12-oz. bottles of beer (domestic or imported)
- ✔ Three 750 ml bottles of the cordials of your choice (such as Irish cream, coffee liqueur or Kahlúa, Grand Marnier, triple sec, Cointreau, Sambuca, white or green crème de menthe, Galliano, B&B, Frangelico, amaretto, peach schnapps, and so on)

The approximate cost to set up this bar is between \$250 and \$300 using domestic and local brands. If you use premium brands, add 20 to 30 percent.



I recommend that you use mostly premium brands. You don't want your guests thinking that you'd serve them anything but the best.

## *A more complete bar*

If you plan to serve more than the basics at your bar, add the following items to the basic bar outlined in the previous section, "The basic setup":

- ✔ One 750 ml bottle of Russian or imported vodka
- ✔ Two 750 ml bottles of flavored vodka (such as lemon, orange, vanilla, or berry)
- ✔ One 750 ml bottle of imported gin
- ✔ One 750 ml bottle of dark rum
- ✔ One 750 ml bottle of coconut-flavored rum
- ✔ One 750 ml or 1.5-liter bottle of 12-year-old Scotch
- ✔ One 750 ml or 1.5-liter bottle of single-malt Scotch
- ✔ One 750 ml bottle of Irish whiskey
- ✔ One 750 ml bottle of Canadian whisky
- ✔ One 750 ml bottle of Tennessee whiskey
- ✔ One 750 ml bottle of gold tequila
- ✔ One 750 ml or 1.5-liter bottle of V.S. or V.S.O.P. cognac
- ✔ One 750 ml bottle of port (imported)
- ✔ One 750 ml bottle of cream sherry
- ✔ One 750 ml bottle of Italian red wine
- ✔ One 750 ml bottle of French Bordeaux
- ✔ One 750 ml bottle of French Burgundy
- ✔ One 750 ml bottle of California white wine
- ✔ One 750 ml bottle of French champagne (nonvintage)
- ✔ Two 750 ml bottles of additional cordials
- ✔ Twelve 12-oz. bottles of imported beer
- ✔ Six 12-oz. bottles of light beer
- ✔ Six 12-oz. bottles of ale

The added cost of these items is about \$300 to \$400.

## *The ultimate bar*

If money is no object and you want the most complete home bar, add the following items:

- ✔ Three 750 ml bottles of flavored vodka (such as lemon, orange, vanilla, or berry)
- ✔ One 750 ml bottle of imported or super-premium domestic vodka
- ✔ One 750 ml bottle of 15-year-old single-malt Scotch
- ✔ One 750 ml bottle of V.S.O.P. cognac
- ✔ One 750 ml bottle of armagnac
- ✔ One 750 ml or 1.5-liter bottle of imported brandy (from Germany, Spain, or Portugal)
- ✔ One 750 ml bottle of dark rum
- ✔ One 750 ml or 1.5-liter bottle of flavored rum
- ✔ One 750 ml or 1.5-liter bottle of gold tequila
- ✔ Two 750 ml bottles of additional cordials
- ✔ Two 750 ml bottles of vintage imported champagne
- ✔ Two 750 ml bottles of domestic champagne
- ✔ Two 750 ml bottles of French Bordeaux
- ✔ Two 750 ml bottles of French Burgundy
- ✔ Two 750 ml bottles of robust Italian red wine (Barolo)
- ✔ Two 750 ml bottles of California white wine
- ✔ Two 750 ml bottles of California red wine
- ✔ One 750 ml bottle of German white wine
- ✔ Six 12-oz. bottles of assorted microbrews
- ✔ Six cans (sizes vary depending on brand) of an energy drink (such as Red Bull or Rock Star)

The added cost of the ultimate bar is roughly \$350 to \$450.

## *Other supplies for your bar*

You need one bottle of the following mixers for every five guests:

- ✓ Cola or diet cola
- ✓ Cranberry juice
- ✓ Ginger ale
- ✓ Grapefruit juice
- ✓ Lemon juice or lemon mix
- ✓ Lemon-Lime soda
- ✓ Lime juice
- ✓ Orange juice
- ✓ Pineapple juice
- ✓ Pomegranate juice
- ✓ Seltzer water or club soda
- ✓ Tomato juice
- ✓ Tonic water

You also need the following fruits and garnishes:

- ✓ Lemon twists
- ✓ Lime and lemon wedges
- ✓ Maraschino cherries
- ✓ Olives
- ✓ Orange slices

Finally, don't forget these items:

- ✓ Angostura bitters
- ✓ Salt and pepper
- ✓ Superfine sugar
- ✓ Tabasco sauce
- ✓ Worcestershire sauce

## The Party Charts

I saved the best part of the chapter for last. Say you're throwing a party. How much liquor and supplies should you buy for the number of guests you invited? Tables 3-1 and 3-2 have all the answers.

### *How much liquor should you buy?*

Table 3-1 shows the amount of liquor you should buy for the number of guests at your party. The left column lists the products, and the remaining columns list the number of bottles of that product you should purchase, depending on how many guests you're having. The last row of the table lists the total costs.

<b>Product (750 ml Bottles)</b>	<b>10–30 Guests</b>	<b>30–40 Guests</b>	<b>40–60 Guests</b>	<b>60–100 Guests</b>
White wine, domestic	5	5	6	8
White wine, imported	2	2	2	3
Red wine, domestic	1	2	3	3
Red wine, imported	1	1	2	2
Blush wine	1	2	2	2
Champagne, domestic	2	3	4	4
Champagne, imported	2	2	2	2
Vermouth, extra dry	1	1	2	2
Vermouth, red	1	1	1	1
Vodka	3	3	3	4

(continued)

**Table 3-1 (continued)**

<b>Product (750 ml Bottles)</b>	<b>10–30 Guests</b>	<b>30–40 Guests</b>	<b>40–60 Guests</b>	<b>60–100 Guests</b>
Rum	2	2	2	2
Gin	1	2	2	3
Scotch	1	2	2	3
Whiskey, American or Canadian	1	1	2	2
Bourbon	1	1	1	1
Irish whiskey	1	1	1	2
Tequila	2	2	2	3
Brandy/cognac	1	2	2	3
Aperitifs (your choice)	1	1	2	2
Cordials (your choice)	3	3	3	3
Beer (12-oz. bottles)	48	72	72	96
<b>Total cost</b>	<b>\$500–\$600</b>	<b>\$600–\$650</b>	<b>\$650–\$725</b>	<b>\$725–\$800</b>

With the exception of beer and wine, Table 3-1 is based on 1¼ oz. of liquor per drink. Cost totals are in U.S. dollars.

The number of products you purchase varies depending on the age of the crowd. If people between the ages of 21 and 35 dominate a crowd, increase the amount of vodka, rum, tequila, and beer by one half.

You should also consider the time of year. In the fall and winter, serve less beer. In the spring and summer, serve more beer, vodka, gin, and tequila.



Geographical location is also an important consideration when it comes to selecting your liquor stock for your guests. Consult a local bartender or liquor clerk to find out what the most popular products are in your area.



## Add a little color to your rim

A great way to add color and fun to any cocktail is to use colored rim salts and sugars, such as the ones available from Stirrings. Stirrings offers 20 different flavored sugars to match just about any Martini you

may be mixing, and the company also offers a Margarita rimmer made from mint, cilantro, lime, and sea salt. Check out [www.stirrings.com](http://www.stirrings.com) for more info.

## How many supplies should you buy?

Your bar needs more than just liquor. Table 3-2 lists the other supplies that you want to purchase. Again, the total costs (in U.S. dollars) are listed in the bottom row.

<i>Product</i>	<i>10-30 Guests</i>	<i>30-40 Guests</i>	<i>40-60 Guests</i>	<i>60-100 Guests</i>
<b>Soda (2-liter bottles)</b>				
Club soda/seltzer water	3	3	4	5
Ginger ale	2	2	2	3
Cola	3	3	3	4
Diet cola	3	3	3	4
Lemon-Lime soda	2	3	3	4
Tonic water	2	2	3	3
<b>Juices (quarts)</b>				
Tomato	2	2	3	3
Grapefruit	2	2	3	3
Orange	2	2	3	3
Cranberry	2	2	3	3

(continued)

**Table 3-2 (continued)**

<i>Product</i>	<i>10–30 Guests</i>	<i>30–40 Guests</i>	<i>40–60 Guests</i>	<i>60–100 Guests</i>
<b>Miscellaneous Items</b>				
Ice (trays)	10	15	20	30
Napkins (dozen)	4	4	6	8
Stirrers (1,000/box)	1	1	1	1
Angostura bitters (bottles)	1	1	1	2
Cream of coconut (cans)	1	2	2	2
Grenadine (bottles)	1	1	1	2
Horseradish (small jars)	1	1	1	2
Lime juice (bottles)	1	1	1	2
Lemons	3	4	5	6
Limes	2	3	3	4
Maraschino cherries (jars)	1	1	1	1
Olives (jars)	1	1	1	1
Oranges	1	2	2	3
Milk (quarts)	1	1	1	2
Mineral water (1-liter bottles)	2	3	4	5
Superfine sugar (boxes)	1	1	1	1
Tabasco sauce (bottles)	1	1	1	1
Worcestershire sauce (bottles)	1	1	1	1
<b>Total cost</b>	<b>\$45–\$50</b>	<b>\$50–\$60</b>	<b>\$60–\$70</b>	<b>\$70–\$80</b>