



THE PRO > AUDREY SAUNDERS  
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# Mixology Starts with the Martini

► The hardest things to master are often the simplest. Take the martini. Put gin and vermouth in a glass and you're good to go, right? Not quite. **With only two ingredients—three if you count the twist (and we do)—there's no room for error.** Ingredients matter, tools matter, techniques matter. So I met up with Saunders, one of the forces behind America's cocktail revolution. After an afternoon of cracking, mixing, and twisting, I knew what she meant when she told me: "A martini is all about confidence." —Dawn Perry

## Classic Martini

4 oz. Beefeater gin  
¾ oz. Noilly Prat dry vermouth  
1 lemon

### 1. Nice Ice, Baby

Hold a large ice cube in the center of your palm. Use the back of a bar spoon (really, any spoon will work) to crack it into smaller jagged pieces. Transfer ice to a mixing glass and repeat until you've got enough cracked ice to fill glass.

### 2. A Smooth Mix

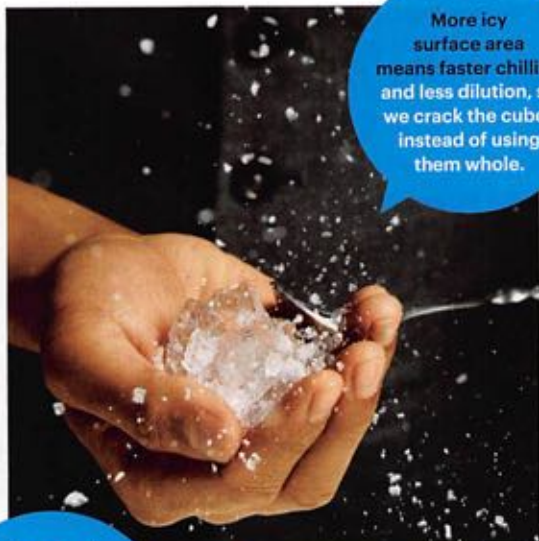
Add **gin** and **vermouth** (it doesn't matter what order). **Just like in cooking, you should taste your ingredients separately and try to pair them thoughtfully** (see chart at right for other Saunders pairings).

### 3. It's All in the Wrist

Bond was wrong. Shaking breaks up the ice, which leads to overdiluted martinis. **Some dilution is good; it softens the spirits so you can taste the botanicals**, not just the heat of the alcohol. Rapidly stir 50 times—count to 50, for real!—in a circular motion; the outside of the glass will be very cold and frosty.

### 4. No Strain, No Gain

Using a Hawthorne strainer, which fits snugly over the top of a mixing glass, or a slotted spoon (in a pinch), strain martini into a chilled Nick and Nora glass. **Strain any remaining martini into a "sidecar"** (use a mini-carafe—on ice, of course), possibly the greatest drinking add-on ever invented. Makes 1



More icy surface area means faster chilling and less dilution, so we crack the cubes instead of using them whole.



Your hand transfers heat. That's why pros never grab the glass while stirring; they just rest a thumb on the rim to steady it.

## Pair It Perfectly

Gin is the backbone of a martini—and each brand has its own particular flavor and character. Dry vermouth, a fortified wine, plays the sidekick role. The key to a nuanced martini is balancing the flavor profiles of both spirits. You don't want an aggressive gin overpowering a delicate vermouth, or vice versa. Here's Saunders's cheat sheet for pairing her favorite gins and vermouths, from subtle to robust.



Gin



Vermouth

PLYMOUTH

DOLIN

BOMBAY

MARTINI & ROSSI  
EXTRA DRY

FORDS

NOILLY  
PRAT

TANQUERAY/  
BEEFEATER

NOILLY  
PRAT

## DO THE TWIST

A **lemon twist** is the classic way to incorporate citrus notes into a martini. Here's how to do it: **1** Use a small knife to remove a 1" piece of peel, including some of the white pith. **2** From a distance of 4 or 5 inches, squeeze peel over drink to express oils. The heavier, more bitter oils will fall to the counter, while the lighter, sweeter oils will hit the drink. **3** Rub the outside of the peel around the rim of the glass, then gently float it on top of the cocktail, yellow side up.

