

Switchel and Shrub: Montclair History Center Colonial Happy Hour 7/10/20

The following ingredients are necessary to build the drinks:

- A bottle of apple cider vinegar (Bragg's Organic is best)
- A bottle of ONE of the following: honey or molasses
- Roughly a quart of any type of berry, feel free to mix! Strawberries will be used in the demo
- Sugar
- Ice

Optional ingredients:

- Soda water (highly recommended)
- Lemons and/or limes
- Fresh ginger
- Fresh turmeric
- Cucumber
- Balsamic vinegar
- Cinnamon
- Nutmeg

If you plan on making alcoholic versions of one or both recipes, the following are suggested spirits to have on hand. You will NOT need them all! We will discuss how to use each so pick a favorite or two:

- Bourbon or rye (for switchel or shrub)
- White rum (for switchel or shrub)
- Tequila or mezcal (for shrub)
- Gin (for shrub)

The following are useful tools to have on hand:

- A fine mesh strainer
- Cocktail mixing cups (if mixing the switchel sour, recipe below)
- A jigger (measuring spoons can sub in a pinch)
- Citrus juicer

Switchel

Switchel, also called a haymaker or swizzle, is a refreshing drink made in colonial times as a natural electrolyte booster while working on farms. The ingredients used show how preservation played a significant role in the colonial pantry. This recipe shows how to build the drink itself, how to modify it to your preferences, and how to add a spirit if you so choose.

Base Ratio:

- 1 part sweetener (honey or molasses)
- 1 part apple cider vinegar
- 10 parts water
- *Optional:* 2 parts spirit (rum or bourbon work well here)

Combine above and stir until the sweetener is fully dissolved

The above ratio provides a very basic switchel which is ready to drink immediately. Below are additional ways to play with the base:

- A splash of citrus juice will liven the drink if you feel it needs a push
- If you have two or more days to make ahead, increase the apple cider vinegar to 1.5 parts and add .5 part citrus juice. The increased acidity will mellow out with time
- Add grated ginger and/or turmeric and allow to sit for a day
- Add a cinnamon stick and allow to sit for a couple of days
- Easy garnishes include an apple slice, a lemon peel, or a little grated nutmeg

Below is a cocktail recipe inspired by switchel:

Switchel Sour

- 1 oz apple cider vinegar
- .5 oz sweetener (honey or molasses)
- 2 oz bourbon
- ½ egg white (optional but makes for a great texture)

Combine and dry shake all ingredients (shake in a cocktail mixture WITHOUT ice for about 10 seconds)

Add ice and shake again

Strain (into a coupe if you have one) and garnish as you please

Shrub

Shrub is less a fully made drink and more a syrup with which to enhance still water or soda. As refrigeration was not a part of colonial life, preservation was key in keeping fruits and vegetables for sustained periods of time. The heightened acidity here not only suppresses microbial activity to keep the fruit fresh but also energizes the final drink, making it a perfect summer sipper.

Base Ratio

- 1 part berries (roughly cut if needed, such as for strawberries)
- 1 part sugar
- 1 part vinegar
- 1 part water

The above ratio in volume measurements is about 1 lb fruit (check container for weight) to 1c of everything else

Combine sugar and water in a pan and bring to a boil

Add fruit and reduce heat to a simmer. Reduce about 10 minutes

Remove from heat and strain the fruit pulp out

Add vinegar and stir to combine/cool

The above recipe acts as a base with which to add still or sparkling water for a refreshing alcohol-free drink. Ways to play with it include:

- Changing or combining different fruits. Berries are great here but so are cherries, apricots and peaches
- Grated ginger and/or turmeric play nicely here. Steep them with the fruit if added
- Play around with vinegars: add a splash of balsamic for a robust character or swap red wine vinegar for a crisp yet fruity profile

When adding spirits, keep in mind that shrub loans itself to the highball family of cocktails wherein spirits and other ingredients are added to a high sided glass (a highball), ice is added, and the whole thing is topped with soda. Below is a take on the classic Tom Collins using shrub:

Shrub It Off

- 2 oz shrub
- 2 oz gin
- Soda (amount will vary)
- Fresh fruit used in the shrub (optional)

Add ice to a highball or high sided glass

Add gin and shrub over the ice and stir

Add soda to fill

Make garnish by spearing the fruit with a pick and placing across the top of the drink