



Two-Layer Lemonade Drops made from Mocktails Brand Karma Sucra Cosmopolitan. Courtesy of Mocktails Brand Nonalcoholic Cocktail

By [Sandra Barrera](#), Los Angeles Daily News

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Dressed up Mocktails Brand cocktails, from left: Watermelon Jalapeno Margarita, Two-Layer Lemonade Drops, Mason Jar Sangria and Sparkling Melon Ball Lemonade Punch. Courtesy of Mocktails Brand Non-Alcoholic Cocktails

This may be the season of holly-jolly parties, but if you don't tipple the holidays can be an endless succession of soft drinks and eggnog.

So if you're hosting the party, why not surprise your teetotaler guests with something totally unexpected, like a nonalcoholic "mocktail."

Shaking up zero-proof cocktails is a fun, festive and sophisticated alternative without any of the negative effects of alcohol. Even better, they're lighter in calories than their boozy counterparts and safe for moms-to-be, health-conscious folks and designated drivers who still want to celebrate with drink in hand.

“Mocktails just allow people to feel like they’re part of a night out, especially when their friends are all drinking,” says Peter Lloyd-Jones, lead bartender at the [1886 Bar at The Raymond](#) in Pasadena, where people come from all over Southern California to enjoy craft cocktails.

Although he says they don’t get many requests for nonalcoholic drinks, the old-fashioned bar’s staff does serve virgin cocktail classics and can even mix and muddle new creations, from the “Cinnabark Swizzle” (cinnamon syrup and three kinds of juice, including pineapple, grapefruit and cranberry served over ice with a splash of soda) to Lloyd-Jones’ own “Violet Beauregard” (ginger syrup, house-made simple syrup, muddled blueberries and fresh lemon shaken and served over crushed ice, and garnished with fresh whole blueberries).

Mixologists often take the culinary approach to crafting mocktails. Instead of using processed ingredients, they go with honey, freshly squeezed fruit juices, infused syrups and fresh fruits, vegetables and herbs, as well as nonalcoholic bitters.

Everything is measured rather than just thrown together.

“To me, it’s like cooking with liquids where there’s no rules; you can do whatever you want,” says David Keenan, beverage director for Blackhouse Hospitality who oversees the cocktail programs at Hermosa Beach restaurants [Abigaile](#) and [Dia de Campo](#).

His staff often mixes nonalcoholic drinks on the fly or they have some tried-and-true recipes.

Abigaile recently introduced to its drink menu the Loquita Bonita Coquita, a tropical twist on the seasonal eggnog (coconut milk, sweet condensed milk and evaporated milk, egg yolks, nutmeg, cinnamon, allspice, cloves, and vanilla and almond extracts) served with or without a shot of whiskey or rum.

“There are always those people who say, ‘That sounds good,’ but can we add some booze to it?” he says, adding it changes the taste. “But we’ll add maybe a touch more sweetness just to counterbalance it.”



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If prepping mocktails seems too overwhelming with all the other party planning left to do, then just pick up some shrub, a fruit and vinegar-based concentrate that can be mixed with sparkling water to create an instant mocktail.

“Whenever we have an open house, we sample them with a little cocktail,” says Jenny Aja, event coordinator at Alexandra’s Table in San Gabriel, which carries [Inna](#) brand shrubs. “They’re delicious.”

[Mocktails Brand Non-Alcoholic Cocktails](#) is another option, but it’s available only at [www.mocktails.com](#) or [Amazon](#) until spring when it’s expected in stores. Founder Bill Gamelli launched the ready-to-serve product last year inspired by his wife, a nondrinker.

“It’s simple, simple, simple,” he says.

Just chill it, shake it like a bartender and then pour it in a glass over ice.

The official Mocktails Brand website also features recipes to help folks fashion drinks to add sparkle to a festive occasion, such as the Two-Layer Lemonade Drops (Mocktails Brand Karma Sucra Cosmopolitan, lemonade and ice shaken and poured in a martini glass with a dribble of grenadine and garnished with fresh raspberries).

“You think about what you’re going to serve at your party from a food point of view and bringing in the kind of beer or wine and cocktails that would be fun,” Gamelli says. “We’re just leveling the playing field by offering an equal drink but without the alcohol.”

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