# Martini cocktail enjoys a sophisticated resurgence with innovative twists and mini serves



The martini—a cocktail long synonymous with style, sophistication, and a certain cinematic flair—has seen a remarkable resurgence in popularity across London and beyond, transcending its former image as a classic but somewhat outdated choice. While the drink had been relegated to nostalgic references or older generations, it has now become a vibrant and versatile staple on bar menus and social media platforms alike. London bars report a sharp rise in demand, with offerings ranging from traditional gin or vodka martinis to playful, inventive variations incorporating ingredients as diverse as tomatoes, matcha, and even chicken broth.

This revival is partly fuelled by the drink’s iconic status and its frequent appearances in popular culture—from Gatsby to Bond, through TV series and celebrity endorsements. TikTok alone hosts over 180,000 martini-related posts, illustrating how the cocktail has permeated contemporary home-mixing trends. Retailers like Selfridges have capitalised on this momentum, with a 200% surge in pre-mixed martini sales in the past year, and themed displays celebrating the drink as a seasonal obsession. Premium venues such as La Petite Maison in Mayfair boast signature offerings like the Tomatini—a fresh, savoury take made with vodka and tomatoes—which have attracted high-profile patrons including Beyoncé and Charli XCX.

Bartenders across London accentuate the martini’s adaptability and elegance. At Qualino’s, for example, creativity flourishes with innovations such as the asparagus martini, while other establishments reaffirm the beauty of simplicity, focusing on quality ingredients and flawless execution. The Dover, a restaurant with martinis as a staple, notes that around 90% of diners opt for the classic vodka version, highlighting a consumer trend favouring minimalism over complex concoctions. This aligns with a broader shift towards refined drinking experiences, where balance, premium components, and appropriate garnishes elevate what could otherwise be a straightforward mix.

Dukes Bar in London holds a particularly esteemed place in martini lore. Renowned as the alleged inspiration for Ian Fleming’s James Bond’s famous “shaken, not stirred” line, Dukes offers martinis with an air of theatricality, serving them on a trolley and maintaining traditions that date back to 1908. The bar’s philosophy emphasises savoring the cocktail as an experience rather than a quick indulgence. The bar manager, Alessandro Palazzi, highlights the dangers of overconsumption due to the drink’s high alcohol content and warns against those attempting to order more than the standard two martinis permitted per customer—a policy rooted in responsible service.

The resurgence may trace its modern roots to the pandemic era, when consumers, spending more time at home, engaged with cocktail culture via social media and celebrity-led tutorials. This renewed interest coincides with a wider industry trend: the rise of mini martinis or “fun-sized” versions, which offer a smaller, more potent experience allowing drinkers to sample multiple variations in one sitting while moderating alcohol intake. Among lovers of the drink, this innovation resonates with the ethos of drinking less but better, underscoring a cultural push towards quality over quantity.

Alongside the classic martini’s ascendancy, its spinoffs such as the espresso martini have also flourished, especially in the U.S. market. The espresso martini’s popularity has surged by 50% recently, propelled by the intertwining of cocktail and coffee cultures, driven by a desire for sensory-rich experiences that combine indulgence with energy. Ready-to-drink versions of espresso martinis have seen explosive growth, with industry data showing a 252% increase in sales within a year. Experts credit this trend to a post-pandemic nightlife rebirth, with consumers seeking both sophistication and practicality in their drinks. The espresso martini’s visual appeal—a velvety top adorned with three coffee beans—makes it particularly Instagrammable, aligning well with social media-driven cocktail culture. This aesthetic appeal is shared by the martini glass itself, which remains an enduring symbol of elegance.

This revival is further reflected in sales patterns and consumer preferences on-premise in bars and restaurants. Market data reveals that classic martinis account for nearly 3% of cocktail sales in key periods, experiencing nearly 10% growth over the previous year. Such growth places the martini among the top ten cocktails in popularity, rivaling contemporary favourites like the spritz. As demand rises, bartenders face challenges in meeting diverse customer expectations, balancing the classic formula’s simplicity with the public’s appetite for creative twists that respect the drink’s heritage.

The excitement around the martini also dovetails with a burgeoning interest in miniature cocktails overall. These smaller serves allow patrons to experience a range of flavours with moderation, fitting perfectly within the modern conscious drinking movement. Prestigious venues offer tasting menus featuring mini versions of classic cocktails, enhancing the sensory experience through carefully crafted pairings and presentation. This trend signals a sophisticated evolution in cocktail culture, one that honours tradition while embracing experimentation and heightened awareness of consumption.

In sum, the martini’s present-day renaissance is a multifaceted phenomenon. Rooted in tradition yet emboldened by innovation, it speaks to a broader cultural desire for drinks that are not only tasteful and elegant but also experiential and social media-savvy. Whether through the classic dry Martini or imaginative new interpretations, its resurgence underlines how timeless cocktails can adapt and thrive in contemporary tastes, offering both familiarity and fresh excitement to a new generation of enthusiasts.

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* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/food-and-drink/martini-cocktail-bond-recipe-demand-rise-trend-b2772358.html), [[3]](https://www.countrylife.co.uk/food-drink/the-imperfect-science-of-the-perfect-martini-and-where-you-can-get-one-in-london)
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* Paragraph 6 – [[4]](https://www.forbes.com/sites/rachelking/2025/03/15/the-rise-fall-and-resurgence-of-the-espresso-martini/), [[5]](https://www.bevnet.com/magazine/issue/2024/black-gold-explaining-the-success-of-the-espresso-martini)
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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/food-and-drink/martini-cocktail-bond-recipe-demand-rise-trend-b2772358.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/c5bbe13a-977e-45cc-8d6c-632de8e8abae> - In this episode of the Life & Art from FT Weekend podcast, Harriet Fitch Little discusses the allure and nuances of the martini with Alice Lascelles, a colleague and martini enthusiast. They explore why this simple drink, made with five parts gin or vodka and one part vermouth, has become a symbol of sophistication and is willing to command high prices in bars, despite being easy to make at home. Alice emphasizes the importance of the ritual and personalization involved in crafting a martini, from the specific type of glassware to the ice used, and offers practical tips for making the perfect martini at home. They discuss the significance of shaking versus stirring, the impact of ingredient quality, and innovative twists like tomato leaf-infused martinis. The episode also touches on how drinks trends evolve and the resurgence of the martini in contemporary culture. Finally, Harriet pitches a Lebanese drink, the doudou shot, seeking Alice's expert opinion on its potential.
3. <https://www.countrylife.co.uk/food-drink/the-imperfect-science-of-the-perfect-martini-and-where-you-can-get-one-in-london> - London is experiencing a Martini renaissance, with bars and restaurants placing increased focus on creating the perfect version of this classic cocktail. From traditional recipes to inventive variations, establishments across the city are offering a spectrum of Martini experiences. Chef Isaac McHale at Bar Valette has introduced sherry-infused Martinis inspired by the "Tuxedo" variation, while cafes like Café François and luxury venues such as The Berkeley are pairing them with the unlikely companion: French fries. Personal preferences vary widely, from dry vodka-based concoctions to those accented with herbal tinctures or sherry. Key locations standing out include The Dover for its stylish iterations, The Connaught Bar with its theatrical trolley service and personalised tinctures, and 69 Colebrooke Row’s unique samphire garnish. Other noteworthy options include the Vesper at Crispin at Studio Voltaire and Martini 45 at 45 Jermyn Street. Across these venues, the ideal Martini is characterised by its simplicity, coldness, and occasionally subtle creative twists. While the beverage’s resurgence delights many patrons, bartenders note the challenges posed by its many interpretations and high customer expectations.
4. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/rachelking/2025/03/15/the-rise-fall-and-resurgence-of-the-espresso-martini/> - The espresso martini has solidified its place among the most popular cocktails in the U.S., with sales surging by 50% by the end of 2023, making it the third top-selling cocktail in the country at the time. Online interest mirrors this rise, with searches for “espresso martini” growing by 89% among Gen Z in 2024, and overall search volume reaching 1.3 million per month as of January 2025. Its momentum has propelled it up cocktail rankings, climbing five spots in the past year and securing a place among the nation’s six most-ordered drinks. "It’s no secret that the espresso martini is having a renaissance, which correlates with the rise in coffee culture,” says Reshma Dhati, senior brand director at Absolut. “The espresso martini is a full sensorial experience resulting in a delicious, velvety taste, beloved coffee scent and a perfect layer of foam topped with three beans." The drink’s appeal extends beyond its caffeine kick. "The espresso martini has transitioned from an after-hours indulgence to an all-day favourite, driven by the craft cocktail movement, coffee culture and at-home mixology," says Clint Spotleson, global advocacy manager for the Disaronno portfolio. He credits bartenders with reviving 1980s and 1990s drinks by integrating fresh ingredients and modern techniques. Some observers argue that its resurgence is more about aesthetics than taste. Social media has played a role in the espresso martini’s ubiquity, with its frothy top and three-bean garnish making it an Instagram-ready cocktail. Brown acknowledges what she describes as the “camera drinks first” mantra that has sprouted in the last decade, in which social media has played a huge role in the spreading of cocktail culture and trends. "The martini glass has always symbolised elegance," Brown says. "But with the deep rich colour of espresso and foamy top after being shaken, it has made this decadent cocktail an Instagram-worthy drink that’s as visually appealing as it is flavourful.
5. <https://www.bevnet.com/magazine/issue/2024/black-gold-explaining-the-success-of-the-espresso-martini> - The fastest-growing subcategories compared to 2022 on Drizly were ready-to-drink (RTD) martinis, driven by the rise in RTD espresso martinis. Overall across off-premise, espresso martini RTDs were up 252% in dollar sales for the latest 52 weeks ending December 30, 2023 versus the previous year, according to NIQ data. In comparison, cold brew cocktail styles were up 13.9% and coffee and cream cocktails were down 79%. More RTD brands have been getting in on the trend: the number of prepared espresso cocktail UPCs rose by 180% at the beginning of 2023 compared to the same time the year prior. Post Meridiem’s Espresso Martini, launched in 2022, is one of them. The SKU just overtook the brand’s Cosmopolitan as a top-three variety. That may be due to timing: the espresso martini re-emerged when drinkers were beginning to go out post-pandemic. “The espresso martini is the Millennial Red Bull and vodka,” said Andrew Rodbell, co-founder of Post Meridiem. “It’s a more natural way to get a boost while drinking alcohol and aligns with their love of coffee culture.”
6. <https://getunion.com/onprem-insights/whats-old-is-new-again-classic-martinis-are-trending> - Orders for the nostalgic, no-nonsense cocktail are strong — especially at dinnertime. The Martini has been a classic for more than a century, evoking Mad Men-esque business lunches, glamorous piano bars, and sultry speakeasies of a bygone era. New data from Union reveals that the iconic drink is once again back in style. While the timeless Martini never entirely went away, we were pleasantly surprised to find that the classic Gin- and Vodka-based Martinis are also selling well with on-premise guests,” says Layne Cox, Union’s chief marketing officer. Classic Martinis account for 2.9 percent of cocktail sales in the 12-month period ending July 31, 2023. And that share is up from 2.7 percent in the prior 12-month period, representing a healthy 9.7 percent growth rate for this standby cocktail, placing the Martini as the No. 10 drink in Union’s list of top-selling cocktails. For perspective, the trending Spritz cocktail, seemingly everywhere these days, ranks as the No. 13 cocktail at Union during this period.
7. <https://www.ft.com/content/c1876ef9-f18e-44da-81de-2df8a4b6c673> - Tiny cocktails are gaining popularity in the bar world, aligning with consumer trends of drinking less but better. These miniature drinks—like mini Martinis, Snaquiris, and Baby Guinnesses—not only offer guests visual charm but also the opportunity to sample a wider range of flavors. Tyler Zielinski's new book, Tiny Cocktails: The Art of Miniature Mixology, highlights this trend. Prestigious establishments such as The Connaught in London and De Vie in Paris now offer cocktail tasting menus with creative, low-alcohol mini drinks—often in custom vessels and paired with snacks. Examples include Press Club in Washington DC, where a four-drink Playlist menu is paired with small bites, and Bar With Shapes For A Name in East London, which explores sensory experiences with micro Martinis. New York’s TY Bar features a trio of 2oz Martinis, and Amsterdam's Advocatuur presents a genever-based miniature Martini with traditional Dutch accompaniments. These "fun-sized" cocktails blend elegance, experimentation, and practicality, appealing to refined palates and sensory adventurers alike.