



The Old-Fashioned: The Story of the World's First Classic Cocktail, with Recipes and Lore

Robert Simonson , Daniel Krieger (Photographer)

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A complete history of one of the world's most iconic cocktails--now the poster child of the modern cocktail revival--with fifty recipes for classic variations as well as contemporary updates.

No single cocktail is as iconic, as beloved, or as discussed and fought-over as the Old-Fashioned. Its formula is simple: just whiskey, bitters, sugar, and ice. But how you combine those ingredients—in what proportion, using which brands, and with what kind of garnish—is the subject of much impassioned debate.

The Old-Fashioned is the spirited, delightfully unexpected story of this renowned and essential drink: its birth as the ur-cocktail in the nineteenth century, darker days in the throes of Prohibition, re-ascension in the 1950s and 1960s (as portrayed and re-popularized by Don Draper on *Mad Men*), and renaissance as the star of the contemporary craft cocktail movement.

Also featured are more than forty cocktail recipes, including classic variations, regional twists, and contemporary updates from top bartenders around the country. All are accessible, delicious, and elegant in their simplicity, demonstrating the versatility and timelessness of the Old-Fashioned formula.

With its rich history, stunning photography, and impeccable recipes, *The Old-Fashioned* is a celebration of one of America's greatest bibulous achievements. It is a necessary addition to any true whiskey- or cocktail-lover's bookshelf, and destined to become a classic on par with its namesake beverage.

The Old-Fashioned: The Story of the World's First Classic Cocktail, with Recipes and Lore Details

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From Reader Review The Old-Fashioned: The Story of the World's First Classic Cocktail, with Recipes and Lore for online ebook

Chelsea Pierce says

Robert Simonson provides the reader with an accessible intro to the Old Fashioned cocktail. He researches various inventors and innovators, and describes a short history of the drink. The second half of the book is dedicated to the classic and modern variations on the recipe. It simply requires whiskey, dashes of bitters, a citrus garnish, and sometimes a syrup. It even includes experiments with rum, gin, and tequila.

Derek says

A solid book on a subject near and dear to my heart (and my liver). The histories are interesting, and the recipes, variations, anecdotes, and weird drinks people somehow manage to still label as an "Old Fashioned" are a nice bonus.

Benjamin Chandler says

A classy little book about my favorite cocktail, half history, half recipes.

Admittedly, being a native Wisconsinite*, I lean towards the Brandy Old-Fashioned (sour, preferably), but the recipes provided from some of today's neo-cocktail artists tempt me to try some new twists. The photos are lovely, and the author clearly has a passion for the drink. He goes through the history without getting dull or too pedantic, though he seems to be a bit puritanical when it comes to putting fruit in the glass. But how could it be dull? We are talking about a classic cocktail from the late 1800s, so its story would of course be as varied and fun as the decades it's lived through.

*Fellow 'Sconnies, fear not—the Brandy Old-Fashioned does get a two-page article, and a recipe from a popular Madison bar is featured in the recipe section.

Jess says

This is a very informative, handsome book. It gives a well-researched history of the Old-Fashioned with cultural context and then provides recipes from across time and the world.

It tackles the all important issue of fruit and does so in the best way possible. The recipes all have explanations and offer substitutions to ingredients that may be difficult to find.

Katie says

A visceral history of the old fashioned, with plenty of back stories and recipes to tempt the tastebuds.

Keegan Fink says

Some good recipes at the end, although as with any modern bar book, the list of cocktails quickly disintegrates into a complex bevy of overly complicated home-brew bitters, labor intensive syrups, and hard-to-obtain liqueurs which are sure to confuse, frustrate, and confound any home mixologist eager to throw back a few easy cocktails. The "history" overall was a little more brief than I'd like, but the overall package is sound, and I read the whole book in mostly one sitting (spread out over two eponymous cocktails).

Christopher Zulueta says

Amazing melange of old-fashioned's modern to the whiskey cocktail with recipes from respectable industry folk. The history and debunked folklore from the many whom claimed ownership of the old-fashioned into the late 1800's sparks interest in the one drink, which cannot be claimed due to its simplicity, and yet, ever-changing recipe well into the Don Draper years. A great tome that isn't too in depth... as it should be... for the drink in itself was an ostentatious fruit-salad that is now being respected for it's clean lines of transparency, block of ice, and citrus peel(s). A must read for bartenders and home cocktail enthusiasts alike...

Dennis Castro says

Awesome book. Beautiful photos and layout. The first half of the book is a relatively brief, but interesting, informative, and nicely written history of the Old-fashioned cocktail. The second half is a wealth of drink recipes from famous bars and bartenders, that appear to ones I will certainly test out. The ironic part is that most of these recipes are not Old-Fashioned drinks, but rather Improved Cocktails. As the book itself points out in the first half, the "improved cocktails" were a result of taking the basic cocktail formula one step further by adding sweeteners other than plain sugar. Once the "improved" cocktails took off, the return to the original cocktail formula using plain sugar was what led to the creation of the Old-Fashioned drink's name.

I love this book. Mainly because I love the Old-Fashioned cocktail and I love the "improved cocktails". It is kind of ironic that the two halves of the book focus on two different things, in my opinion. However, in spite of that, that's especially why I love this book!

Lukas Evan says

Whiskey (preferably rye), water, sugar, bitters, a big ice cube, and maybe a twist of lemon or orange. Anything else is barbaric.

Mr. Smidl says

I would really rate this around 3.5 but it stems from the poor editing job and a lot of the recipes I will never

utilize. I am definitely a part of the school that enjoys a classic Old-Fashioned that does not incorporate a lot of fruit. If you read this book, you'll understand a lot of the little nuisances. The story is interesting and wish there was more to it.

A. says

This is a neat little book about the history of the old-fashioned, which--as you'll find if you read it--is far more contentious than one might assume! Small vignettes about notorious bartenders, responses to Prohibition, and the various reputations surrounding various versions of the drink reflect Simonson's copious research as well as his knack for retelling it. My favorite aspect of the book, being a lifelong Wisconsinite myself, was the appearance of our state in the story of this shapeshifting cocktail. (Spoiler: Wisconsin is one of few places in which the preferred recipe of the old-fashioned has remained unchanged and popular through time... since the early 1900s!) There are also over 40 recipes for variations on the old-fashioned at the end of the book. The photographs throughout the book may be the actual star of this book, though--they are deliciously atmospheric and quite lovely.

Jason says

Netgalley

When it comes to Irish Whisky I prefer Powers or Paddy to the overly marketed Jameson. When it comes to Rye hands down the only option is Bulleit rye—at least in the states. There are a whole myriad of reasons I prefer Whisky to Rye in a public forum, ranging from cost, to the blatant abuse of the Old-Fashioned by young, 20-something-scholarship-toddler-bartenders, to availability; though powers is really difficult to find in Boston bars. Because my tightly held opinion over the composition of the Old-Fashioned is unwavering, this is often a drink I make in the comfort of my own apartment. I am really controlling, as you may have noticed. My public drinking habits have infiltrated casual home drinking, and thus my Old-fashioneds always contain Powers.

I can't tell you how I developed this pattern of Old-Fashioned drinking, however, I can say with certainty that it was my transition from a college wasteland of vodka —crap vodka—and trendy drinks. I then ventured to Scotch without even realizing it. I ordered it in excess in Canada and fell into the arms of Johnnie Black—apparently some strangers as well, however I was told they were all very fit lads—throughout an entire weekend, and then if I recall fell into a tub in my flat, lost my pants somehow and my underwear, and eh, maybe a bit of pride (not likely). And, Scotch makes its exit.

A few years later I started with whisky, and fell IN LOVE with Powers! Oh, but wait, America, you don't have Powers anywhere? And you think that Jameson is some sort of god? I tossed around the idea of Rye but it was too harsh as a stand-alone. Somewhere around here I started making Old-Fashioneds. I started with the basics without even knowing I was:

2 ounce Whisky (at this point it's always Powers at home)
1 sugar cube
2 dash bitters

and one small orange twist

Following the simple directions of muddling bitters and cube, NO WATER EVER! I was told to then put a hunk of ice in it and give it a around about in the glass, pour in the liquor, twist the orange, drop and savor.

The brilliance of this book is its approachability. The point of me telling you the lengthy bla bla bla of my drinking escapades is to emphasize that I too, after years of perfecting my own old-fashioned recipe—and a side of prudishness—can suspend my drinking pride and get into this book.

The book establishes a strong hold on the history of the drink. This portion is extensive and impressive in the amount of knowledge dispersed in such a limited amount of pages. Let's see...

An explanation of the various forms the drink has taken over a century

The historical relevance of the drink, and the ways historical events altered the drink

Controversy over the person/people responsible for its creation (no one leaves Unscathed here)

The reasons, many of historical significance, regarding that horrible muddled fruit salad

The various liquors used in the drink, and the who, what, where, how, when involved in their introduction, and sometimes exit

An amazing amount of data regarding origin and what drink birthed the Old-Fashioned

Oh and sooo sooo much more.

This Book reads like a Mary Roach novel. It is clever, maybe not as funny in the traditional sense but will still instigate a few laughs, and the facts are endless and incredibly insightful.

Unlike your traditional and recklessly put together liquor recipe book, this one offers the recipes, along side a fairly lengthy explanation of its origin or the selection of liquor, and often both. What's helpful here is that it offers a myriad of options, even in terms of the new recipes that the opinionated drinker will have a tizzy over—like myself.

I highly recommend this book to those who cherish this simple and delightful drink, but ALSO those who just want a quick, comprehensive outline of the history of the cocktail, its origin, and why the Old-Fashioned reigns supreme; and there we have the cockiness.

A printed version will make a comfortable brother to 'Mr. Boston'; the recipe book, not me, though I have a feeling I will be having a nice, healthy relationship with this book.

Lucy says

My favourite cocktail is an old-fashioned so when I saw this book, I had to read it. It proved to be an excellent read! It starts off with a history of the cocktail, from its creation to its growth in popularity. I found

this very interesting as I didn't know much about the origins of the drink. After the history, Simonson discusses how the drink is viewed in modern culture and provides some very delicious looking recipes, offering a new twist on the drink, created by American bartenders. This would make a great gift for anyone who loves an old-fashioned or two and anyone interested in cocktails in general.

Jason McKinney says

At first I thought this was a glorified pamphlet because the book proper is less than half the length and the rest is taken up by recipes. Upon closer examination, I discovered that those recipes tell a story of their own. They run the gamut from the very first Old Fashioned to some that the author himself created. This is a fun and interesting read that is also incredibly quick.

to'c says

Well! Thanks to Mr. Simonson I certainly know more about the Old-Fashioned than I ever did before!

And probably too much to make my friends happy. "Did you know that in 1833..." I can sense them already tensing up whenever I have a cocktail in hand. ;0)

But what a load of facts there are about the simple and humble predecessor to all cocktails. So much to know about a simple mixture of spirit-sweetener-bitter. I could barely put this book down, truth to tell. I've wanted to be an Old-Fashioned drinker for awhile now but was put off by all that muddling and fruit and wanted something simple to make. Guess what? The Old-Fashioned, as perceived pre-Prohibition, is exactly that. A sugar cube, some warm water, two dashes of bitters, crush the cube, two shots of whiskey, a big cube, stir until chilled, orange zest, done. It'll be my go to drink from now on.
