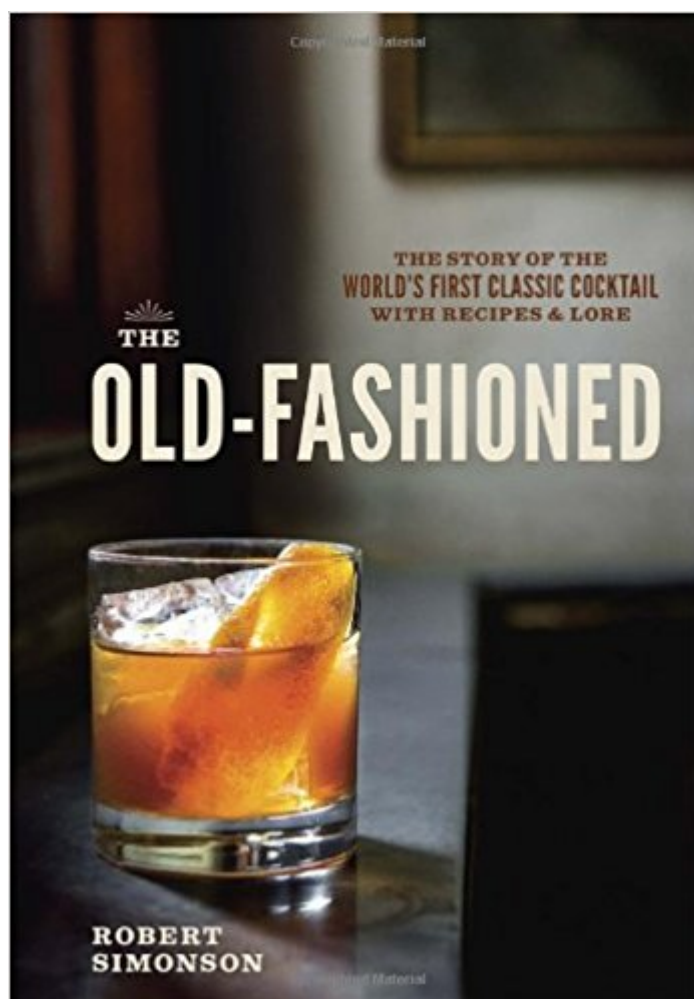


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# The Old-Fashioned: The Story Of The World's First Classic Cocktail, With Recipes And Lore



## Synopsis

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.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"an excellent history of the Old-Fashioned" --Rien Fertel, *The Wall Street Journal* "Robert

Simonson is such an engaging author that he makes this the perfect book to accompany an easy chair and a well-made Old-Fashioned cocktail . . . An incisive, impeccably researched story of this too often forgotten classic cocktail, resulting in some good rollicking stories that American history is rich in." — John Mariani, *The Huffington Post* "[...] you won't be engrossed in his book just because of all the mythology surrounding this storied drink. It's filled with gorgeous photos of the Old-Fashioned in its eponymous glass and with recipes (which comprise a good half of the book) both traditional and modern, swapping out the whiskey for pretty much every other spirit available." — Ariana Auber, *Austin American Statesman* "Simonson takes us on a witty and engaging tour through the drink's long history and ends with recipes for traditional mixes and experimental twists. Like a good old-fashioned, his writing is dry but sweet; it's got a kick, but is also low-key and best savored slowly." — David Cote, *Time Out New York* "If you like a little lore with your whiskey, then this book is for you. It covers the story of how this one drink has survived from the early 19th century, through Prohibition, and now back again to being one of our favorites. [...] Alone or with a bottle of rye, this makes for the perfect holiday gift for the drink lover on your list." — Maureen Petrosky, *The Kitchen*

ROBERT SIMONSON, journalist and author, is one of the leading authorities on spirits and cocktail culture in the United States. Called "our man in the liquor-soaked trenches" by the *New York Times*, he has written extensively about cocktails, spirits, bars, and bartenders for the *Times*, as well as *GQ*, *Wine Enthusiast*, *Wine Advocate*, *Imbibe*, *Edible Manhattan* and *Edible Brooklyn*, and *Time Out New York*. He lives in Brooklyn, New York.

Make no mistake; this is a good book and a must have for anyone who wants to sit down and read the history of a particular cocktail. And, as would be expected, there are more than a few recipes to play with, all of which sound fine except the bacon fat Old Fashioned and that thing they drink in Wisconsin, but to each his own. Simonson traces the history of the drink as best it can be traced, through old bartenders manuals and newspaper clippings filling in here and there with anecdotes of some of the more colorful characters one expects to meet on such a journey. It's also important, or I think it is, that younger fans of good cocktails be grounded in some history, particularly how Prohibition adversely affected our drinking habits. There isn't simply a cocktail renaissance occurring, but an American whiskey renaissance producing high quality spirits that are better than anything made before Prohibition. A few years ago, George T. Stagg Bourbon, a 140 proof masterpiece was chosen in a blind tasting by international experts as the finest spirit in the world.

Take that brandy lovers. Cards on the table; I am an Old Fashioned snob, and I suspect Simonson is as well. I'm a bourbon man and my gut tells me he's a rye man, but that same gut tells me neither one of us would turn down a good quality dram of the other. He seems to have a preference for the earlier recipes and he seems to have a particular disdain for the fruits. He makes several disparaging remarks about "fruit salads" and "the garbage" in the drink. This is where he comes up short, and he didn't have to because he had the reasoning in his hands, David Embury's "The Fine Art of Mixing Drinks." In fact he commits an unforgivable sin - he chastises Mr. Embury. David Embury, by his own admission, "trumpeting" would be a better word, notes he is just a "mixer upper" of drinks at home and not associated with the liquor business at all. He wrote a classic: "The Fine Art of Mixing Drinks" in 1948 (erroneously reported in one part of the book as 1958, obviously a typo, but later corrected to 1948) a second, updated edition in paperback was released a few years later, but it is not a book of recipes, rather a text on the fundamentals of spirituous liquors and cocktail mixing that are as valid today as the day he wrote them. Of course Mr. Embury, who died in 1958, discusses the Old Fashioned as one of the six basic cocktails. Simonson tells us Mr. Embury contradicts himself by appearing simultaneously to favor a simple drink unadorned with fruit and then tells us how good fruits blend with American whiskeys (they do). But Embury wasn't writing a book about making original recipes. He was instructing the readers on the basics and then showing them how to build on that. Simonson himself notes that the architecture of the Old Fashioned allows "mixologists" a great deal of latitude to create good tasting drinks within its template. Embury was doing that for all cocktails. The Old Fashioned as an aperitif, he tell us, should have little or no fruit in it at all. As a mid summer's drink, feel free to load up on oranges, pineapples, and what have you, according to your tastes. His was not a book for purists. Simonson is on firmer ground when he criticizes Mr. Embury for disdaining the use of water in cocktails. But even here there is a misunderstanding. Embury was loathe to use water as an ingredient in quantities as large as that of the liquor. But he had no problem insisting on cracked ice in an Old Fashioned, which melts quickly and dilutes the drink. At least it does it slowly. And it's been more than 65 years since the book was published. We know things now about how a drop or two of water can release some flavors in the whiskey that we might otherwise miss. I'm sure if Mr. Embury were alive today, he would change his mind when confronted with the scientific evidence, as he enjoyed the bonanza of fine American whiskeys unavailable to him in his lifetime. Somewhat dated or not, his book is a must have. But where they really part ways is on the business of muddling the fruit, an awful practice that, should it stop, would prevent some truly dreadful drinks from being served. Embury points out what Simonson misses. Muddling or crushing orange rind releases a very bitter oil that adds nothing to

the drink's flavor no matter how steeped in denial a drinker might be. This not true of a lemon rind (or an orange peel), whose bitter oil, in much smaller quantities, adds to the flavor of the drink. I agree the cherry, muddled or not, doesn't add much, so don't make a beautiful drink ugly by mashing up one, but plop it in if you like the look. What doesn't seem to bother Simonson at all is the unnecessary process of muddling the sugar cube after soaking it in bitters. Simple syrup, used sparingly (after being made in ratios different than he suggests) can be mixed with the bitters in seconds while muddling the sugar cube to the point where it will actually dissolve is time consuming and produces nothing of superior value to the flavor of the drink. What does make a difference is the quality of the whiskey. Simonson suggests some very good ones including Elijah Craig 12 year old, a \$70 quality bourbon selling for about \$35.00. He also mentions the truly excellent Rittenhouse Bottled in Bond Rye (a bourbon drinker's rye) and Bulleit Rye (they also make a good bourbon). During prohibition some seriously revolting concoctions were dreamed up to hide the flavor of some really awful whiskey (much of it Canadian). The Old Fashioned is not one of those drinks. Using a high quality liquor, even one that might be considered "too good" to drink any other way than neat, produces a real gourmet's delight. What doesn't bother Simonson at all, and that which makes me cringe, is the scotch Old Fashioned. Most scotches and all blended ones have a smoky taste that does not blend well with fruit, muddled or decorative, or much of anything else that has a distinctive flavor. Scotch is scotch and people like it, but there is a reason it is used in highballs and drunk neat or on the rocks. It has limited use in a cocktail. What doesn't make the list of ingredients for an interesting Old Fashioned, and perhaps should have, is Irish Whiskey. A pot still Irish has sufficient body to make a decent cocktail and lacks the smoky taste of scotch. But Simonson impresses when he casually mentions that a good quality Applejack makes a great Old Fashioned. There are very few people today who even know what Applejack is. It is nearly as versatile as American Whiskey and can be used in a variety of cocktails. It is reasonably priced and should be in everyone's liquor cabinet. Like I said, I'm an Old Fashioned snob and the ultimate determining factor is the pallet of the person drinking it. It's your money, drink it as you see fit, but save some of your money for this wonderful little book and amaze your friends with your new found knowledge of the lineage of the true King of the Cocktails. Enjoy one while you read.

Simonson's day job is writing about cocktails for the New York Times so he brings a wealth of knowledge and a wonderful writing style to his favorite drink: The Old-Fashioned. He has done an impressive amount of research into the history of the drink, which he covers in the first 65 pages of the book. The next 93 pages consist of both old recipes and new variations for the

Old-Fashioned. If you are a fan of the Old-Fashioned, this is a book you should seriously consider adding to your cocktail library.

This book is a short read that eventually becomes a quick reference guide for the endless variations on the classic Old Fashioned cocktail. This hard covered book is a luxury in itself; just when you thought that an Old Fashioned just comprises of a sugar cube, bitters and your choice of bourbon; you thought wrong! There are literally hundreds of different ways that you can perfect this time-tested libation. I've learned throughout the years that this isn't just a drink, but an experience. What will you substitute the sweetness with when you're simply out of sugar? Can wine or liqueurs act as a bitters replacement? How far are you willing to go to redefine the limits of the Old Fashioned?

I bought this for my boss who is a big whiskey/ bourbon fan and he absolutely loved it. We flipped through it together and there are some GREAT cocktail recipies. He has already made a few of them. The book is great quality and would make a perfect gift for the whiskey fan in your life.

Great stories in this book! I got it for my husband, and I have officially stolen it. The humor this book is written with surprised me and makes it a delightful read.

Wonderful book, worthwhile to read for any fan of Old Fashioned or any mixed drinks. The author's storytelling was quite entertaining, well written. As one of the Mid-South area, I was quite intrigued by Mr Simonson's mention of the first reference to the Whiskey Cocktail as a "FASHION-able accompaniment" by the Memphis Daily Appeal of late 1800s, prior being christened as the Old Fashioned. Well done and my compliments, Mr Simonson!!!

Great read, if you have interest in cocktail history. It has beautiful pictures and MANY variations of the classic. It is an easy read and will leave you thirsty.

This book is FANTASTIC, I originally bought it for the photography by Daniel Krieger and recipes but it was extremely fascinating to learn about the history of this iconic cocktail. I recommend this to anyone looking to expand their cocktail knowledge.

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