

VOICE OF THE EXPERT:

CHEERS TO CRAFTING THE FLAVOR OF COCKTAILS!

Janaina Brasil da Rocha, Sr Scientist



The buzz around crafted cocktails continues, as consumers enjoy classic and creative adult beverages and mocktails. From perennial favorites like Old Fashioneds and Bee's Knees to inventive combinations made with shrubs, herbs and a variety of spirits, syrups, juices and even smoke, mixologists have a variety of ingredients and methods at their disposal to create memorable drinks – and memories.

There is room for more innovation, too, as a recent report from Mintel* affirms that consumers are interested in trying new and unique flavor combinations in ready-to-drink adult beverages. Shifting lifestyles and events like Dry January also create opportunities for flavor exploration in low-ABV and no-alcohol formulations. Cocktails are even 'meeting the kitchen' with their profiles making appearances in food applications from desserts to savory sauces.

Consumers recognize the taste nuances and sensation of their favorite cocktails. However, delivering that same taste and sensation to ready-to-drink beverages is often a challenge. Janaina Brasil da Rocha, Senior Beverage Scientist, shares tips on how to create and deliver cocktail flavors that delight consumers.



Q. What challenges do developers face when aiming to deliver 'cocktail' flavor into their applications?

A. Cocktails are a mix of flavors as well as sensations, notably the alcohol burn you experience in the mouth. It is difficult to recreate or mimic that alcohol burn because it is specific to the type of alcohol in the cocktail. The burn from distilled alcohol, for instance, is different than the burn from fermented alcohol. So, it can be a challenge to mimic a sensation and balance it with flavor.

Q. How do you approach solving that challenge of imparting both taste and sensation?

A. Crafting delicious cocktail profiles that have the same sensation of real alcohol requires a balanced formula of flavor science, applications expertise, and collaboration.

Approaches vary by customer need and the specific type of cocktail experience they are seeking, but we start with some general considerations.

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First, you need to build a base with a non-flavored liquid that gives body to the beverage and has the right balance of sweetness and acidity. For other applications, it is an understanding of the base that the flavor will go into. Next, our team that includes flavorists, application scientists, and often a mixologist, works to identify the desired taste experience and ingredients that build the cocktail, understanding the notes and nuances of each ingredient's flavor along with the distinctive burning sensation. And there are nuances – a silver, less aged tequila, for example, is best for margaritas.

From there, we layer and balance flavors, utilizing top notes like smoke, oak, bourbon or other profiles. To add an appealing complexity or finishing touch that provide the right sensation, we can incorporate an alcohol enhancer to evoke that experience in both alcoholic and non-alcoholic applications. One of my favorite parts of working on these applications is playing with nuances that cover or enhance other flavors.

“ I love being in the lab experimenting with flavors to replicate beverages I've tried or have seen on social media. I am passionate about creating delicious cocktail profiles. ”



Some of Janaina's Favorite Cocktail Flavor Profiles Great for alcoholic drinks, zero proof drinks and other applications

Aviation	Lavender Gin Gimlet	Mojito
Bellini with Prosecco	Limoncello	Negroni
Espresso Martini	Margarita	Old Fashioned
Herb Garden Spritz	Michelada	Paloma

Q. Do you see these cocktail profiles used in a broader range of applications, including foods?

A. As boundaries blur, we see more alcohol and cocktail profiles appearing in food applications. This is exciting and allows us to take this same approach of building and layering flavors to replicate the experience of a cocktail in fun applications. For example, we have created a mojito cookie that utilizes the same great flavors. We're excited to take authentic cocktail profiles in all types of applications.



Ready to raise the bar on cocktail inspired flavor?

Reach out to discuss or request a flavor sample.

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