



Leadership... with a Twist!

A refreshing blend of rum, lime juice, sugar and mint, the **Mojito** cocktail has generated a great deal of attention in the U.S. over the last several years. But its origins can be traced back to the 19th-century sugar cane fields of Cuba, and perhaps even farther back.

As with many classic cocktails, the history of the **Mojito** is murky and open to debate. The first documented mixture of rum, lime juice and sugar is found in Britain *circa* 1650: corresponding with the wide availability of rum in the Isles, the "El Draque" cocktail honored British naval hero Sir Francis Drake.

The Cuban roots of the **Mojito** are linked to the African slaves who worked the sugar cane fields in the 1800s. *Guarapo*, a sweet, refreshing beverage made from sugar cane and favored by the workers, is still often used to make the Cuban **Mojito**.

Even the name **Mojito** is subject to contention. Some give a nod to the Cuban lime-flavored seasoning *mojo*, while others claim *mojito* is a derivative of Spanish words meaning "wet" or "a little wet."

Ernest Hemingway was a notable devotee of the **Mojito**, and it was his cocktail of choice during his travels to Cuba. Hemingway was a regular at *La Bodeguita del Medio* bar in Havana, where his testament to the drink is still written on the walls:

My mojito in La Bodeguita. My daiquiri in El Floridita.

This association probably only solidified the legendary status of the cocktail -- and certainly did nothing to diminish Hemingway's legend!

Mojito

In a Collins glass, add:

*Juice of ½ fresh lime
2 tsps. superfine sugar
2 mint sprigs*

*Gently mash with a muddler; the mint leaves should only be bruised, not shredded, to release essential oils.
With a long-handled spoon, briefly stir to dissolve the sugar and lift the mint sprigs off the bottom.*

To the muddled ingredients, add:

*Cubed ice
2 oz. premium white rum
Soda water*

Drop the squeezed half-lime shell into the drink and fill to the top with sparkling water.

Garnish with 1 mint sprig.