With a legend that can be traced back to the 19th century, the assumption is often made that the **Tom Collins** cocktail is named after an historical figure -- the answer is, yes and no.

The recipe for the **Tom Collins** -- gin, lemon juice, sugar and soda water -- first appeared in print in the 1876 *The Bartender's Guide*, authored by Jerry Thomas, widely considered to be the father of American mixology.

The name of the cocktail most likely resulted from The Great Tom Collins Hoax of 1874. (We don't make this stuff up -- read on…)

At that time, a popular practical joke in New York and Pennsylvania was to begin a conversation on the street by asking, "Have you seen Tom Collins?" When the listener predictably responded that he did not know Tom Collins, the speaker would act concerned, noting that Mr. Collins had been making some unpleasant and untrue statements about him. When the listener (predictably) became agitated, he was told that Collins was last spotted just around the corner or at a nearby bar. The flummoxed listener would then dash off to find the offending (but fictitious) Mr. Collins. Several newspapers of the era promulgated the joke by publishing stories of false sightings of Tom Collins.

The **Tom Collins** holds such a significant place in mixology that the preferred glass for serving the cocktail -- a tall, narrow 10-14 oz. tumbler -- is called a Collins glass.

With its relative simplicity, the gin-based **Tom Collins** has numerous variations that go by multiple names:

John Collins – served with bourbon as base spirit; scotch in western U.S.)

Juan Collins – white or silver tequila replaces gin

Ron Collins – made with rum

Brandy Collins / Vodka Collins – *you've got these figured out!*

<u>Tom Collins</u>
Fill a Collins glass with cubed ice and add:
2 oz. of gin
1.5 oz. of fresh lemon juice
1 tsp. of sugar or simple syrup

Fill to the top with soda or lemon-lime soda (depending on preferred sweetness).

Garnish with an orange slice and maraschino cherry.