

Smarter, slimmer alcoholic drinks

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(HealthDay)—Wine and spirits are tallied in the "empty calories" column because they lack any nutritional benefits. Add cream or soda to make a mixed drink and you can more than double the caloric damage.

So how can you enjoy a cocktail without wrecking your diet? Here are some options.

Choose your [alcoholic drinks](#) wisely. A light beer has about a third less calories than regular beer. A shot of vodka, whiskey or gin—that's 1.5 fluid ounces—has about 100 calories or less; so does a 4-ounce glass of wine or champagne.

When you want a mixed drink, make your own lighter version of classics by limiting the amount of alcohol you put in. For instance, for a Bloody Mary, mix half the amount of vodka with extra tomato juice and spices.

If you're trying to lose weight, you'll want to skip some drinks, especially those made with cream liqueurs, like those flavored with chocolate and coconut, as well as drinks with [cream](#) or creamy ingredients like Egg Nog, Pina Coladas and White Russians. Some of these indulgences have more than 400 calories—the amount in an entire meal of wholesome ingredients.

Prepackaged drink mixers might be convenient, but they're also very high in sugar. Make your own flavored frozen daiquiris and margaritas by blending a shot of liquor with unsweetened frozen fruit chunks instead.

Calories aside, remember that healthy limits on drinks are two a day max for men and one for women.

More information: The Dietary Guidelines 2015-2020 can help you better understand how [alcohol can affect your diet](#) so you can make the best choices.

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