

I like a good margarita. Not a giant vat of margarita made from mystery mix, but a cocktail in a sweet little 1950's size stemmed glass.

I thought for Christmas a cranberry margarita would be fun and there are lots of recipes, so why reinvent the wheel? I tried one made with cranberry juice, but found I had purchased cranberry cocktail. Yuck. It tasted like apple juice that a cranberry had walked by.

I messed around with the recipe, but only ended up sort of getting used to it as my face went numb. I'm not saying I was drunk, but the last swallow tasted pretty good because my discrimination skills were gone.

The next day I found some cherry juice that is just tart cherries, period. They had it at Costco, but coops carry it too.

Here's what I came up with. Because everybody's taste is different, I'm leaving some wiggle room in the sugar and lime juice. I'm writing this using the word "part" because your part might be a half cup if you're doing several. My part was a shot glass.

Christmas Margarita

1 part each Tequila and tart cherry juice.
1/2 part each Triple Sec and water
About 1/3 part fresh lime juice
About 1/4 part fine sugar

Shake over ice and pour into a salt or sugar rimmed stemmed cocktail glass. Garnish with a lime slice and anything else you find festive in red or green. Within reason.

My sister in law makes a killer Old Fashioned that she puts under a glass hood with a little smoker puffed in to make it more interesting. I don't have one of those, but I bought some smoked pickled cherries from The Fermentation Station in St. Paul that gives the same effect, but I don't think they have cherries all the time. I'm sorry. I guess you're on your own.

Leta's Old Fashioned

1-1/2 shots of good bourbon
A few dashes of bitters
About 1 tablespoon of real maple syrup
3 smoked cherries
A few ice cubes

Mx it up, pour over ice. Garnish it up if you're feeling fancy.