Hospitality beverage glossary

64 practical terms for restaurant teams | Version 2.0 | Training reference

Use these plain-language definitions during induction and pre-service training. Check the actual product label, house recipe and local service rules before advising a guest. Drink names and legal label categories are not interchangeable.

Bar service

ABV Alcohol by volume: the percentage of a drink's volume that is ethanol.

Aperitif A drink served before a meal; it may be alcoholic or alcohol-free.

Digestif An after-meal drink. The term is a service convention, not a health claim.

Jigger A measuring tool. Check its actual marked capacity rather than assuming a universal measure.

Neat Served without ice or a mixer.

On the rocks Served over ice.

Up Chilled during preparation and strained into a glass without ice.

Muddling Pressing ingredients to release flavour; follow the recipe to avoid over-crushing.

Shaking Mixing and chilling ingredients in a shaker, usually with ice.

Stirring Mixing and chilling gently with a bar spoon, usually with ice.

Straining Separating the mixed drink from ice or other solids.

Boston shaker A two-piece shaker, commonly two tins or a tin and a mixing glass.

Garnish A finishing ingredient that contributes aroma, flavour or appearance.

Simple syrup Sugar dissolved in water; ratios vary and should be specified in the recipe.

Gomme syrup A sugar syrup containing gum arabic; it is not simply another name for every sugar syrup.

Bitters Concentrated bitter and aromatic flavouring; many versions contain alcohol.

Beer and brewing

Beer A fermented beverage typically made with malted grain, water, hops and yeast.

Ale Beer fermented with ale yeast. Colour and hop intensity do not define the category.

Lager Beer fermented with lager yeast and commonly cold-matured. It can be pale or dark.

Malt Grain that has been germinated and dried for brewing or distilling.

Grist Milled grain prepared for mashing.

Mash Grain mixed with water so enzymes can convert starch into fermentable sugars.

Wort The sugary liquid produced during brewing before fermentation.

Hops Plant cones used for bitterness and aroma in many beers.

Yeast Microorganisms that convert fermentable sugars into alcohol and carbon dioxide.

Fermentation The conversion of sugars by microorganisms; alcoholic fermentation produces ethanol and carbon dioxide.

Adjunct A brewing ingredient such as unmalted grain or sugar used alongside the main malt source.

Draught beer Beer dispensed from a tap system.

Keg A container used to store and dispense beer, usually under pressure.

Bottle conditioning Secondary fermentation in the bottle, often producing carbonation.

Low or no alcohol Label terms whose legal definitions vary by market. Check the actual ABV and applicable label.

Pilsner A lager style; not every lager is a pilsner.

Wine and spirits

Wine An alcoholic beverage produced by fermenting grapes; other fruit wines are identified by their fruit.

Dry In wine tasting, a style without noticeable sweetness. It does not mean high tannin.

Acidity The fresh, sour aspect of a drink that can stimulate salivation.

Tannin Compounds that create an astringent, drying sensation, especially in many red wines.

Body The perceived weight and fullness of a drink in the mouth.

Aroma The smells perceived from a beverage.

Finish The sensations that remain after tasting.

Fortified wine Wine to which spirit has been added during production.

Sparkling wine Wine containing enough dissolved carbon dioxide to produce bubbles on opening.

Liqueur A sweetened, flavoured spirit-based drink.

Distillation Separating components of a liquid by vaporisation and condensation.

Pot still A vessel used for batch distillation. Its use alone does not establish quality.

Column still Distillation equipment using a column with multiple separation stages.

Botanicals Plant materials used to flavour products such as gin.

Brandy A spirit distilled from wine or fermented fruit; the fruit may be specified on the label.

US proof A US strength convention equal to twice the numerical ABV; 40% ABV is 80 proof.

Tea coffee and alcohol-free service

Camellia sinensis The tea plant from which black, green, white and oolong teas are made.

Black tea Tea in which substantial oxidation develops colour and flavour during processing.

Green tea Tea heated early in processing to limit oxidation.

Oolong A partly oxidised tea; styles vary widely.

Earl Grey Tea flavoured with bergamot, commonly made with a black-tea base.

Tisane An infusion of ingredients such as herbs, flowers or fruit rather than tea leaves.

Fannings and dust Small particle grades of tea; particle size alone is not a complete quality assessment.

Espresso Coffee brewed by forcing hot water through a compact bed of finely ground coffee.

Extraction The transfer of soluble material from coffee into water during brewing.

Brew ratio The relationship between coffee dose and water or beverage yield; state which ratio you mean.

Crema The foam on an espresso. Its appearance alone does not prove flavour quality.

Americano Espresso diluted with hot water.

Cold brew Coffee extracted using cool or room-temperature water over an extended period.

Smoothie A blended drink that usually retains the pulp or body of its ingredients.

Mocktail A cocktail-style mixed drink made without an alcoholic base; check every ingredient.

Allergen check Verification of ingredients and preparation risks, including milk, nuts, syrups, garnishes and shared equipment.

Use the glossary in training

Ask each team member to explain five terms in their own words, demonstrate the relevant service step and identify one ingredient or measure that must be checked. Use the wine field guide for more detailed wine service practice.

Term or skill	Demonstrated correctly	Follow-up / trainer / date

References and use

Beer ingredients and styles: https://www.wsetglobal.com/knowledge-centre/blog/2023/november/what-is-beer-a-beginner-s-guide/

Wine terms: https://www.wsetglobal.com/knowledge-centre/blog/2022/september/27/busting-wine-industry-jargon/

Tea types: https://www.tea.co.uk/types-of-tea/1000

Espresso: https://sca.coffee/sca-news/25-magazine/issue-3/defining-ever-changing-espresso-25-magazine-issue-3-zyx36

US proof definition: https://www.ttb.gov/scientific-services-division/dbmenu1sub1

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