



Watermelon Mojito

SERVES 4

The national drink of Cuba was born sometime in the 16th century, originally crafted as means for utilizing citrus to prevent scurvy in pirates and sailors. They blended lime juice with sugarcane, spearmint, and rum to create a medicine that has become the world-famous mojito. On my visit to Cuba, every bartender I met claimed to mix the best mojito, each one altering the beverage with varying levels of sugar, mint, and tropical juices. And each one had a legitimate case!

Taking their cue to find my own signature spin, when the season allows I include ripe watermelon pressed through a sieve in my mojitos. I find the melon brings a refreshingly bright dimension to this timeless beverage.

INGREDIENTS

1/2 cup water

1/4 cup sugar

1 cup watermelon, seeded and cut into cubes

1/2 cup light rum

3/4 cup fresh mint leaves, plus extra for garnish

2 limes, quartered

Crushed ice

12 ounces soda water, chilled

PROCESS:

Combine the water and sugar in a saucepan and bring to a simmer over medium-high heat. Cook until the sugar dissolves, about 5 minutes. Let cool.

In a blender or food processor, blend the watermelon until smooth. Strain through a sieve into a small glass. In a jug or pitcher, combine the sugar syrup, rum, and mint. Use a muddler or end of a wooden spoon to crush the mint into the liquid. Add the lime quarters and continue to crush with the muddler or spoon. Add soda and stir to combine.

To serve, fill four glasses with crushed ice and pour the drink through a strainer into the glasses. Top each glass with 2 tablespoons of watermelon juice, then garnish with mint.