

# summer entertaining with nicole

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## nicole aloni

Nicole Aloni is a cookbook author, culinary instructor and freelance writer with more than 20 years of experience as a leader in the catering industry. Her popular books on the art of entertaining, *Secrets from a Caterer's Kitchen* and *Cooking for Company*, are available on [samsclub.com](http://samsclub.com). Her newest book, *The Backyard Bartender*, is available now.

By Nicole Aloni

Summer has finally arrived and what better way to celebrate this lazy season than with a fizzy libation? Muggy afternoons spent poolside, picnics at the beach, parties under a starry sky, summer is all about relaxation and fun. And when the mercury climbs, there's no better way to unwind than with an ice cold cocktail. That's why I've written *The Backyard Bartender* with cocktail tips and recipes that celebrate summer's laid-back attitude.

Included here are three of my favorite recipes from the book and some tips on creating perfect cocktails to turn your yard into summer's coolest hangout.

### Things to know about summer cocktails (or any cocktails really):

- **CHILL**—They should be crisply cold. Whenever possible chill the glass, chill the alcohol and shake or stir the liquids vigorously on ice before serving. Cold is critical to making alcohol its best!
- **MEASURE**—Having watched Tom Cruise in *Cocktail*, you may think that measuring the ingredients for a cocktail is for wimps. Not so! The very best mixologists know you must carefully measure each component to create great cocktails.
- **GARNISH**—Cocktails should be easy on the eyes. Express your creativity by adding a flavored rim to the glass or a whimsical garnish that adds another dimension to the flavors in the drink.
- **SIZE**—A cocktail should be compact. They were originally designed to be sipped not gulped. A cocktail should contain no more than three ounces of alcohol and no more than five or six ingredients.

Liquor brands may vary by Club. Liquor is available in select Clubs. Please drink responsibly.

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## The Lawnmower

Recipe by Nicole Aloni

Delicate melon, mint and a hint of vanilla make this into a silky-textured refresher. The Lawnmower would be perfect at an engagement party or as a signature drink at a summer wedding.



Makes 2 servings:

- 1 cup diced, ripe honeydew, cantaloupe or seedless watermelon
- 1 tbsp. sliced fresh mint
- 1 oz. premium vanilla vodka, like Grey Goose®
- 1/2 oz. Cointreau®
- 3/4 oz. lime juice
- About 1/2 cup cold Brut Champagne or dry, sparkling wine

Glass: martini or margarita

Garnish: melon and mint

Directions:

1. In a blender, purée melon and mint (add a tablespoon or two of water if necessary).
2. Press melon mixture through a strainer into a cocktail shaker filled with ice.
3. Add remaining ingredients, except Champagne, and shake vigorously to infuse.
4. Strain into chilled martini or margarita glasses and top with champagne float. Stir once.



The Backyard Bartender

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## Lemon Drop Martini

Recipe by Nicole Aloni

The lemon drop became a fad in California in the '70s as one of the first "girlie" martinis and has remained one of the most popular. For those who like sour candy and lemon tarts—this is the best.



Makes 1 serving:

- 2 lemon wedges
- 3/4 tsp. simple syrup\*
- 1-1/2 oz. premium lemon vodka, like Grey Goose®
- 1/2 oz. Cointreau®

Glass: chilled martini

Rim: superfine sugar or crushed lemon drop candies

Garnish: lemon peel twists

Directions:

1. Rub the rim of the glass with a lemon wedge. Press glass into a saucer of superfine sugar or crushed lemon drops.
2. Put the lemon wedges and simple syrup in a cocktail shaker and muddle well. Add vodka and Cointreau. Fill with ice.
3. Shake vigorously to chill.
4. Strain the mixture into a glass. Garnish.

\*Simple syrup is made by heating sugar and water. See [samsclub.com/entertaining](http://samsclub.com/entertaining) for complete instructions.