

THE PERFECT MIX

The Ultimate Event Bar Planning Guide



EXACTLY WHAT TO BUY, HOW MUCH YOU
NEED & HOW TO AVOID COSTLY MISTAKES

www.theperfectmixsocal.com



Hello there!

Planning your event bar should feel exciting—not overwhelming.

This guide was created to give you complete clarity and confidence when planning your bar.

Whether you're hosting a wedding, private party, or corporate event, you'll learn exactly what to buy, how much you need, and how to create an experience your guests will love.

Julie

Founder, The Perfect Mix



Step 1: Start with Your Guest Experience



Before you buy anything, ask yourself:

- Do you want a simple bar or an elevated experience?
- Will cocktails be a focal point of your event?
- What do your guests typically drink?

“Your bar should reflect your event style, not just your budget.”

Step 2: Choose Your Bar Style

Beer & Wine Only

Best for:

- Casual events
- Smaller budgets
- Faster service

Full Bar Experience

Best for:

- Large guest counts
- High-energy events
- Maximum variety

Signature Cocktail Bar (Most Popular)

Best for:

- Weddings
- Elevated events
- Balanced budget + experience

Includes:

- 2-3 cocktails
- Beer & wine



Step 3: How Much Alcohol to Buy

THE GOLDEN RULE:

Plan for 2–3 drinks per
guest, per hour

Example: 100 Guests (5 Hours)

Beer

- 6–8 cases (24-pack)

Wine

- 18–24 bottles
(60% white/champagne, 40% red)

Spirits

- 6–8 bottles per featured liquor
Recommended:
 - Vodka
 - Tequila
 - Bourbon



Pro Tip:

Cocktail Hour typically
is the busiest time for
the bar at events.

Most guests consume 2
drinks each during
cocktail hour so speed
and preparation are
key to making sure the
bar runs smoothly.



Step 4: Cocktail Strategy

The biggest mistake people make:
Too many drink options

KEEP IT SIMPLE: 2-5 COCKTAILS MAX

WHY THIS WORKS:

- ✓ Faster service
- ✓ Less waste
- ✓ Better guest experience
- ✓ Easier logistics

CROWD FAVORITES

- Margarita • Paloma • Espresso Martini
- Aperol Spritz • Mojito • Old Fashioned

Step 5: Mixers & Ingredients



Upgrade Tip:

Use fresh juices/syrups and elevated garnishes like flowers and fresh herbs for a more premium feel.

ELEVATE & CREATE

“A great event isn’t about having everything—it’s about having the right things, done well.”

A WELL-STOCKED BAR TYPICALLY INCLUDES:

- ✓ Club soda & tonic water
- ✓ Coke, Diet Coke, Sprite
- ✓ Pineapple, cranberry & orange juice
- ✓ Simple syrup(s) & bitters
- ✓ Fresh citrus (lemons & limes)



Step 6: Ice

The Most Overlooked Detail

Plan for 1-1.5 lbs of ice per guest. If your event is outdoors, plan for 2-2.5 lbs of ice per person, especially if it's warm weather.

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WHY IT MATTERS:

- ✓ Running out can lead to disaster & stress
- ✓ Too much ice leads to wasted product and wasted money
- ✓ Ice directly impacts drink quality, presentation, and overall experience



Step 7: Staffing

1

Recommended:

Think about your guests and their drinking habits. Heavier drinking crowds mean you will want to add another bartender to keep the flow going and lines minimal.

2

Break it Down:

- 0-50 guests → 1 bartender
- 50-100 guests → 1-2 bartenders
- 100-150 guests → 2-3 bartenders

3

Pro Tip:

More bartenders does not always equal faster service & a better experience. Hire a professional & licensed bartending staff. You'll be glad you did!





Step 8: Bar Setup & Flow

A great bar isn't just about drinks—it's about how it runs.

Key elements:

- Clear menu display with simple text that highlights the signature cocktails and other offerings of the bar.
- Organized bar layout. Talk to your bar team and find out how much space they need for the bar area and go over the location of the bar with the staff.
- Easy guest access. Make sure your guests have adequate space to get to the bar.
- Enough space for bartenders. This goes along with bar layout. Make sure your bar staff has enough room to maneuver so they can create an efficient workspace.



Step 9: Common Mistakes to Avoid



X

- Buying too many alcohol options - Less is more
- Underestimating ice

X

- Not hiring enough bartenders or hiring unlicensed bartenders
- Overcomplicating cocktails

X

- Forgetting non-alcoholic options
- Poor bar placement

Step 10: Pro Tips from The Perfect Mix

Simplicity beats variety

Presentation matters more than quantity

Prep everything in advance

Focus on guest experience

Your bar should feel
just as intentional as the
rest of your event.



Understanding Bottle Sizes & Drink Yield

Knowing bottle sizes helps you avoid overbuying or running out.

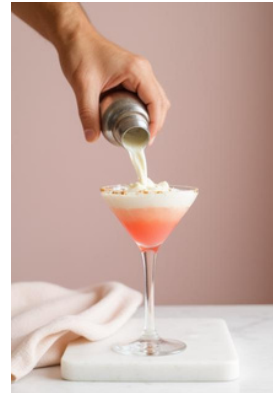


750ml Bottle (Standard Size)

- Most common size used for events
- Produces approximately 16–17 standard drinks

1 Liter Bottle (1L)

- Slightly larger than standard
- Produces approximately 21–22 standard drinks



1.75 Liter Bottle (Handle)

- Best value for high-volume events
- Produces approximately 38–40 standard drinks

Pro Tip: If you're serving a high-demand liquor (like vodka or tequila), buying 1.75L bottles can save money and reduce restocking during the event.

Drink Calculator

Use this simple formula to estimate exactly how much alcohol you'll need for your event.

Step 1: Start with Your Guest Count

Write your number here:

Guests: _____

Hours of service: _____

Step 2: Calculate Total Drinks Needed

Formula:

Guests × Hours × 2.5 drinks per hour

Example: 100 guests × 5 hours × 2.5 = 1,250 total drinks

Step 3: Break It Down by Type

A balanced bar typically looks like:

- 40% Beer
- 30% Wine
- 30% Cocktails/Spirits

Step 4: Convert Drinks into Bottles - Use this guide:

Beer

1 case (24 beers) = 24 drinks

Wine

1 bottle = 5 glasses

Spirits (750ml)

1 bottle = ~16 drinks

Step 5: Your Personalized Estimate

Fill this in:

Beer: _____ drinks → _____ cases

Wine: _____ drinks → _____ bottles

Spirits: _____ drinks → _____ bottles - 750ml, 1L or 1.75L

Example: 100 Guests | 5 Hours

Total drinks: 1,250

- Beer (40%) → 500 drinks → ~21 cases
- Wine (30%) → 375 drinks → ~75 bottles
- Spirits (30%) → 375 drinks → ~24 bottles

All spirit calculations are based on standard 750ml bottles. Adjust quantities if purchasing larger format bottles.

PRO TIPS

- Round DOWN slightly—don't overbuy
- Buy extra of your most popular liquor
- Keep receipts for returns
- Adjust based on your crowd (wine lovers, tequila crowd, etc.)

This calculator gives you a strong starting point—we'll always recommend adjusting based on your specific menu and guest preferences.



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Cheers to a Seamless Celebration

If there's one thing to remember, it's this:
Your bar doesn't need to have everything—
it just needs to have the right things.

A great bar isn't about overcomplicating—it's
about creating an experience that feels effortless,
fun, and just a little bit elevated.

Thank you for trusting The Perfect Mix to be part
of your planning process. It truly means so much.
If you ever decide you'd rather hand this off and
have it done for you... you know where to find us.

Cheers,
The Perfect Mix

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