

## Midcentury Cocktails: History, Lore and Recipes from America's Atomic Age

**Cecelia Tichi**

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Cecelia Tichi's *Midcentury Cocktails* blends history, literature, and cultural critiques to address trends in alcohol and entertainment in the 1950s and 1960s.

Despite what jokes about Baby Boomers suggest, the 1950s and 1960s were not a homogeneous time in the US. The alcohol culture of the period revealed tensions between Cold War industries, road-tripping beatniks, postwar disgruntled housewives, and the first *Playboy* bunnies. The same decades that birthed McCarthyism also paved the way for a tiki craze. These cultural strains are apparent in the chosen drinks of the era, which range from martinis and Manhattans to sophisticated egg-white cocktails like the Clover Club.

Gender is a major theme, as is race. The distinction between men and women's drinking habits receives attention, as does the Green Book, an early manual devoted to helping Black American travelers navigate which hotels and bars were more or less racist in the Jim Crow US. Literary luminaries including Ernest Hemingway and Sylvia Plath grace the pages, too, with their observations about American drinking habits. *Breakfast at Tiffany's* receives its own chapter. If one desires educated drinking buddies, this book delivers them in spades, with wry humor to point out both people's accomplishments and shortcomings.

Illustrations and recipe lists accompany each chapter; these are visual, flavorful ways to engage with the book's cultural history lessons. Some of the recipes assume access to special ingredients like orzata and falernum, but one imagines that, in the generous American spirit of adventurousness, mixologists can improvise as needed.

*Midcentury Cocktails* is a delightful, nostalgic trip through the 1950s and 1960s with recipes for recreating Atomic Age intoxications.

JEANA JORGENSEN (November / December 2022)

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