



LIQUOR CABINET ROULETTE

## WHAT IS CARDAMARO AND WHY SHOULD YOU DRINK IT RIGHT NOW?

BY CAREY JONES AND JOHN D. MCCARTHY | DEC 14 2015



© Carey Jones

You could be forgiven for thinking that Cardamaro was a cardamom amaro. (Confession... we're the experts here, and we thought so until quite recently.) I mean, if you were naming Italian liqueurs, that's what Cardamaro would mean, right?

But the truth is something more interesting. Cardamaro is a wine-based aperitif, infused with cardoon and blessed thistle (two artichoke relatives), then aged in oak. The result has the richness and weight of sweet vermouth, and only a gentle herbal bitterness. It really tastes like a lighter, more drinkable version of artichoke-based [Cynar](#)—and that's a delicious thing indeed.

We're fans of sipping Cardamaro straight or on the rocks, but it might be even better incorporated into cocktails. Here are three to try.

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# Easy: Carda-Grapefruit



We love grapefruit as a match for just about anything bittersweet, and Cardamaro is no exception. Add some juice and soda and you've got a super-sippable tall drink that's way more complex than its ingredient list might indicate.

*Instructions:* In a tall glass with ice, combine 1.5 ounces of Cardamaro, 2 ounces of fresh grapefruit juice, and 2 ounces of club soda. Give a quick stir and garnish with a grapefruit slice.

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## Intermediate: Carda-quila Manhattan



A little vegetal, but slightly mellowed — that describes Cardamaro. But those are characteristics we associate with reposado (slightly aged) tequila, too. Stir them together in a Manhattan-style cocktail and you've got a drink that's super-smooth and just weighty enough for winter.

*Instructions:* In a mixing glass with ice, combine 1.5 ounces of reposado tequila, 1.5 ounces of Cardamaro, and 1/4 ounce of agave syrup (that's just agave you buy from the store, cut with an equal amount of hot water). Add a dash of Angostura bitters. Stir all that up until well-chilled, then strain into a cocktail glass. Garnish with a twist of grapefruit and/or a brandied cherry.

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## Advanced: Carda-rye Sour



The spiciness of rye whiskey is an ideal match for Cardamaro, so putting them together with lemon and sugar results in a pretty irresistible sour. Since Cardamaro is quite low-proof, we're pairing it with a higher-proof rye like Wild Turkey 101: look for that bottle, or another one that's 100-proof or thereabouts.

*Instructions:* In a cocktail shaker with ice, combine 1.5 ounces of high-proof rye, 1 ounce of Cardamaro, 3/4 ounce of lemon juice, and 1/2 ounce of simple syrup. Add a dash of Angostura bitters. Shake all that up well, then strain into a rocks glass with fresh ice. Squeeze in a lemon wedge, and leave that in the drink as a garnish.