

Concord Grape Smash

By Erik Lombardo

The smash, according to cocktail great David Embury, is “essentially a julep on a small plan,” indicating that originally it was a pretty elementary combination of mint, sugar and spirit. In essence, rather than the slowly sipped julep, the smash was meant to be a quick quaffer. Throughout the cocktail’s evolution the base recipe became augmented with citrus (more refreshment) and fruit. The type of fruit used can be changed throughout the year to fit the season, making the smash an incredibly versatile year-round drink. Add to that the fact that you can change the base spirit as well and you have, quite literally, everyone’s favorite drink. In the spring try gin with lavender and honey, in the summer try any spirit with fresh berries, and when peaches come around, a peach bourbon smash is so good it’s almost indecent. In the winter take advantage of amazing citrus like blood oranges and kumquats paired with a blend of spirit and grand marnier and in the fall, for those 5 or so magic weeks in the Northeast, indulge yourself in concord grape smash made with rum.

Serves 1

- 2 ounces white rum
- 1/2 a lemon cut into 4 cubes
- 3/4 ounces sugar syrup (1:1 sugar:water)
- 4 to 6 mint leaves
- 4 to 6 concord grapes

1. Muddle the lemon cubes, mint, and grapes briefly in a shaker then add the sugar syrup and spirit.
2. Shake briskly but briefly (6 seconds max) with plenty of ice and strain into a large rocks glass filled with crushed ice. If the size of your glass allows, dome fresh crushed ice on top and garnish with a few grapes and a mint sprig.