vinetur

Watermelon Basil Spritz Sets the Bar for Easy Summer Entertaining

The drink everyone's talking about: Watermelon basil spritz

Tuesday, June 24, 2025



As temperatures climb across the country this month, bartenders from Charleston to Santa Barbara are pouring a watermelon basil spritz that checks every box for hosts eager to keep guests refreshed without spending the whole party behind the bar. The drink was first sketched out in March by Caroline Baxter, beverage director for the

boutique hotel group Seafarer Hospitality, after she noticed a sharp uptick in demand for low-alcohol, produce-forward cocktails during spring wedding season. Working at the company's rooftop Citrus Club in Charleston, she blended freshly pressed watermelon juice with a splash of basil-infused simple syrup and chose a lightly aged blanco tequila as the base to give the drink enough structure for food pairings.

By early May, the recipe had traveled up the East Coast via bar-manager group chats and landed on menus at Summerland in Newport, Rhode Island, and at LoHi Social in Denver. Hosts appreciate that a single batch holds its flavor for several hours; Baxter recommends combining eight cups of watermelon juice with two cups of tequila, one cup of syrup, and the juice of eight limes in a pitcher kept on ice, then topping each glass with three ounces of chilled sparkling rosé as it's served. The basil syrup, made by simmering equal parts sugar and water with a handful of fresh leaves for three minutes, lends a herbal note that accentuates watermelon's natural sweetness while keeping the overall alcohol by volume under ten percent.

Retailers have felt the ripple effect. Whole Foods Market reported a nineteen-percent jump in watermelon purchases during the first two weeks of June compared with the same period last year, and Drizly says sales of under-proof tequila—products bottled at or below eighty proof—are up twelve percent since Memorial Day. The drink's photogenic coral hue has also fueled social-media traction; Baxter's original Instagram reel demonstrating the build, posted on April 27, has topped 1.6 million views, drawing inquiries from suburban hosts looking for an alternative to canned spritzes.

While many summer cocktails lean on citrus or tonic, the watermelon basil spritz achieves carbonation from the sparkling rosé alone, a choice that frees hosts from stocking multiple mixers. At recent backyard gatherings in Fort Worth and Atlanta, caterers have paired the drink with chilled peel-and-eat shrimp, cotija-dusted street corn, and peach caprese skewers, citing its moderate acidity and subtle salinity as a unifying thread. Baxter expects the drink's popularity to crest around the Fourth of July, though she notes that late-season yellow watermelon works just as well and shifts the color toward a golden hue that matches early-autumn décor.