

# The Measure

Ring in spring with new gins, ginger-laced switchels and punchy martinis

Words HANNAH GUINNESS @hannahguinness



Ice isn't just for cooling down drinks. Shaking or stirring a cocktail with ice will dilute it, marry flavours and create a smoother end result. But it's important to pick the right ice for your drink.

Standard cubes are a reliable option for many cocktails as their even size ensures consistent chilling and dilution. For a boozy stirred tippie, such as a negroni, jumbo ice cubes are best as they melt slowly, ensuring the drink doesn't get watery. Large ice balls are even better at doing this (both shapes also work well for sipping neat spirits). Try retailers such as Amazon for silicone moulds to make these chunky cubes.

Crushed ice will quickly chill a drink and dilute intense or thick syrups, juices and purées. It's also great for spirit-forward drinks that need dilution, including a mint julep. You can easily blitz ice in a food processor, but it will melt quickly, so serve the drink immediately.

## 3 to try... switchels

Deliciously tart, grown-up soft drinks



### Zingi Bear

£3.95/330ml

[vinegarshed.com](http://vinegarshed.com)

We loved this perky, fizzy switchel, sweetened with acacia honey – think of it as a tangier, complex take on ginger beer.



### Remedy Tropical Switchel

£1.99/250ml,

Holland & Barrett

Easy-going and more gently tart than other switchels, this is a great entry-level option for those new to the category.



### Mother Root Ginger Switchel

£19/480ml,

[motherroot.london](http://motherroot.london)

Made with pressed ginger juice and blossom honey, this packs in satisfyingly fiery ginger heat. Try as a piquant aperitif with tonic.

## gins of the month

**Engine** is a bright, accessible gin with a cool aesthetic appeal – it comes in a retro car oil can – with fresh, super-aromatic hits of lemon peel, piney juniper and herbaceous sage. Try in a martini with a twist of lemon peel (£37.95/50cl, [thewhiskyexchange.com](http://thewhiskyexchange.com)). Also on our radar is **Bullards Coastal Gin**, inspired by the Norfolk coastline, with a delicate salty, savoury character and complex notes of sea vegetables, citrus and fennel. Once you've drained the bottle you can send off for a recyclable refill pouch (£40/70cl, [bullardspirits.co.uk](http://bullardspirits.co.uk)). Finally, **Kingdom's Ginger Spiced Gin** is a new small-batch spirit that, at 57.3% ABV, packs a hefty punch, but it's a kick that works well with the warming spicy profile of the gin – think ginger, cardamom and coriander. Try with apple or pear juice (£36/70cl, [kingdomrecommends.co.uk](http://kingdomrecommends.co.uk)).



## 3-ingredient cocktail

### Vesper martini

Pour 60ml of **London dry gin**, 20ml of **vodka** and 10ml of **Lillet Blanc** into a cocktail shaker with ice. Shake well, then strain into a frozen martini or nick and nora glass, and garnish with a **lemon twist**.