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# Basque Cocktails for Beginners

by Patti Murphy

Anyone who lives in Boise knows that Basques know how to enjoy life. Whether they are dancing, playing sports, eating or drinking, Basques always seem to throw themselves completely into celebrating their culture. And, fortunately, they are happy to take the rest of us along for the ride.

With one of the largest Basque populations per capita outside of the Basque country, Boise has paid homage to the culture by setting aside an entire Basque Block downtown ([www.thebasqueblock.com](http://www.thebasqueblock.com)). Lined with Basque pubs, restaurants, a Basque community center, and the only Basque museum in the United States, a visitor can learn about Basque history, watch a live game of Basque handball in the underground fronton court, eat some delicious croquetas, and sip on a Basque cocktail, all in the same day.

If you're thinking wine is the Basque libation of choice, you're mostly right. Throughout history wine has played a large role in Basque culture—working



people in both the Basque country and the U.S. used to be paid in gallons of wine.

Today, you can belly up to nearly any Basque bar and order a cocktail that may be difficult to pronounce, but easy to enjoy and duplicate at home.

Ron Meadows, who bartends at Boise's Leku Ona ([www.iparagon.com/lekuona/](http://www.iparagon.com/lekuona/)) on the Basque Block, says that the *Kalimotxo* is one of the more popular drinks he conjures up.

"It's made from half cola and half cheap red wine," he said, noting that you don't want to mix expensive wine with cola.

The *Kalimotxo* is said to have originated at a festival in Algorta, Spain in 1972 when some young entrepreneurs discovered that the wine they were going to sell tasted bad, and added Coca-Cola and ice to mask the flavor.

## More Basque Cocktail Secrets

If wine and cola is not for you, here are more popular Basque cocktail recipes, courtesy of Leku Ona. Now, simply add a plate of tapas and a bit of accordion music and celebrate life!

### Picon Punch

*In a glass with ice, pour 1 1/2 oz. Amer Picon (Torani Amer) and a splash of grenadine. Fill with soda water. Stir. Add a float of Brandy and a lemon peel twist and/or cherry for garnish.*

### Sol y Sombra (sun and shade)

*In a brandy snifter, pour 1 1/2 oz. brandy and 1 1/2 oz. anisette.*

### Basquetini

*In a glass with ice, pour 1 1/2 oz. sweet vermouth. Fill with soda water to top. Add a dash of bitter and a float of Campari. Optional garnish: green olives.*