

BARTENDER ADVISORY GROUP

SODA – SELTZER - TONIC

Club Soda

The choice of most bartenders as a sparkling element, club soda includes added minerals like sodium bicarbonate and sodium citrate, resulting in fine bubbles and a mineral and slightly saline taste that makes it a closer match to sparkling mineral water than to seltzer. Bartenders love the salinity for the way it enhances many cocktails.

Seltzer Water

Seltzer is simply plain water that has been carbonated or injected with carbon dioxide. Its flavor is neutral, but popular brands typically come in a wide variety of flavors, from lemon-lime to hibiscus. Hard seltzer, meanwhile, is made with an alcoholic base such as fermented cane sugar.

Sparkling Mineral Water

Consider sparkling mineral water seltzer's cousin who studied abroad. Bottles like Perrier and Badoit include naturally occurring bubbles from sources like springs and wells; sometimes additional effervescence is added artificially. Flavor profiles and bubble sizes will vary based on the terroir and the minerals naturally present in the source: Natural springs in the Italian Alps give San Pellegrino a touch of salinity, while a limestone spring in Mexico gives Topo Chico its bouncy bubbles and what some consider a slightly citrusy taste.

Tonic Water

You can use most sparkling waters interchangeably in a pinch, but that's not the case with tonic water. Made with a base of soda water, the mixer gets its characteristic bitterness from the addition of quinine, a compound that comes from the bark of the Central American cinchona tree, once beloved for its antimalarial properties. Companies like Schweppes and Canada Dry usually add high-fructose corn syrup to balance the bitterness; you might instead try premium brands which employ less-processed sweeteners like cane sugar and agave. Tonic water is a natural match for gin and vodka, but you can use it any time you want to give a drink a bitter, bracing quality. Switch up your G&T with a White Port & Tonic or a Summer Tonic, a refreshing mix of rum, amaro, and aromatic tonic water.