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## HOUSE COCKTAIL

# The Cocktail That Lets You Drink Your Vegetables

MATT DUCKOR / 05.01.15

Green juices are great and all, but we're all about the green *cocktail*.  
"Eat your vegetables."

It's something that no child ever wants to hear. But now that we're all grown up, we suck down those fancy kale-cucumber-celery juices all the time. Know what else we're allowed to do now? Drink great cocktails. So why not enjoy a delicious alcoholic beverage that's pretty much all green juice?

That was my mission for this month's [Epicurious House Cocktail](#). I ended up with [The Green Vesper](#), a drink that's sophisticated, stiff, and, with its emerald-green color, damn pretty to look at. Yes, it's loaded with vegetables. But the road to a vegetal cocktail wasn't easy.

First I tried infusing vodka with kale, but the flavor didn't really permeate the booze all that well (plus it tasted a bit bitter). Next, I tried muddling something green and fresh in the bottom of a cocktail shaker (I tried peas—too fibrous). Finally, I turned to simple syrup, the staple cocktail combination of equal parts sugar and water. It's a terrific carrier for flavors like citrus and spice,

so I thought that arugula, with its gentle but peppery flavor, would make a good pair, too. And it worked. In a blender, I blitzed a few cups of arugula with some simple syrup and strained it to create a bright-green syrup that had the perfect balance of sweet and green.



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Okay, great, arugula simple syrup. Slightly bitter, slightly sweet—but definitely not something you'd want to drink on its own. Now, what to do with the stuff?

For inspiration I turned to the [Vesper](#), a classic variation on the Martini that's mostly gin, a little bit vodka, and a dash of [Lillet](#), the citrusy-sweet French aperitif wine. It's often referred to as a Martini for people who don't drink Martinis because, well, it's not pure gin or vodka. Instead, the Martini's boozy heat is balanced out with acid and a touch of sweetness.

My [Green Vesper](#) is a lot like a regular Vesper—three parts dry gin, one part good-quality vodka. Instead of Lillet, it's arugula syrup and lemon juice that provide the sweet and acidic notes. But the drink isn't some shy, vegetable-forward cocktail—it still packs the same potent punch that you expect from a classic Martini.

The final curveball? A pinch of salt. Just like in cooking, seasoning your cocktails can make certain flavors sing louder. In this case, just a dash really brings out the leafy flavor of that arugula.

Now, if you'll excuse me, I'm going to get to work on a non-alcoholic version for all those kids out there.