

RC Bar at The Ritz-Carlton Istanbul

The RC Bar at [The Ritz-Carlton Istanbul](#) features award-winning cocktails, a large whiskey collection and cigars.

While we were staying at The Ritz-Carlton Istanbul in March 2006, we serendipitously met head bartender, Cevat Yildirim at the RC Bar. We always enjoy speaking with bartenders around the world to learn what they see as the latest in cocktail trends; with Cevat, we struck the mother lode, as it turns out that he is an award-winning cocktail champion, having won 1st place in the World Cocktail Championship in Finland.



Over a few cocktails during the next few evenings, we learned that while the rest of the cocktailian world has recently 'found' bitters, Cevat is not big on bitters, but rather likes to use lots of natural fruit juices including apple juice and pomegranate juice, and also infusions that he makes. He enjoys using a special digestive that he creates from an infusion of pineapple and alcohol that takes 6 months to make.



He also explained the art of drinking raki the famous Turkish anise alcohol that is usually drank over the course of an evening with friends as an accompaniment to meze (Turkish appetizers or tapas). Although you may be familiar with anisette, this is no liqueur; this is a highly potent libation that is 45% alcohol, and it is like drinking a liquid licorice stick. There is a debate among people over the 'proper' way to drink raki; some prefer to drink raki neat accompanied by a 'chaser' of water, and some like to add water directly to the raki, but either way, this is pure potent alcohol that should definitely be drunk with food. Raki is a neutrally buoyant spirit; if you add water to a glass and then pour in raki, the raki will float. Add some water to the raki and water mixture, add an ice cube and gently stir the ice cube, and as the ice cube starts melting, the water and raki mixture at the top of the glass will become cloudy, but the raki will float above the water on the bottom of the glass, creating a white layer that he called the 'hula dancer.' Mix raki with water and stir with a long spoon and it will become cloudy and is called "Lion's Milk."

Created by: Debra C. Argen and Edward F. Nesta

Cevat is the consummate bartender and very generously shares his award-winning cocktail recipes for El-Rei and the Pineapple Kiss. One sip of these drinks and you will see why he is a World Cocktail Champion.

El-Rei

3	cl	vodka
1	cl	apple schnapps
2	cl	apple juice
0.5	cl	peach syrup
0.5	cl	lime juice

Place ingredients in a shaker with ice, shake hard, and then strain into a martini glass. Garnish with a slice of apple and a strawberry.

Pineapple Kiss

2	cl	vodka
1	cl	Malibu coconut rum
1	cl	Cointreau
10	cl	pineapple juice
0.5	cl	grenadine

Fill a highball glass with ice and add ingredients. Garnish with a slice of orange.

This is a long drink that is best sipped through a straw to really set the flavor on your tongue.

The Ritz-Carlton Istanbul

Suzer Plaza, Elmadag Askerocagi Cad. No 15

Sisli 34367 Istanbul -Turkey

Telephone + 90 212 334 44 44

Fax: + 90 212 334 44 64

www.ritzcarlton.com

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