



**W**hat is Campari? That was the question that I asked myself the other day on flight 51 from Frankfurt. Two guys sitting in seats 1 H and J asked for Campari and orange juice. After asking them to repeat their request several times, due to their heavy accent, I managed to understand the Campari and orange juice part of their request; I replied that I don't think we have that. They both looked like two deer staring into headlights. I was not sure if they did not understand me or if they know

more about what we have onboard then I did. Since it's a new day at NWA I put on my new day smile and said, "I will be right back".



After giving me that you stupid junior flight attendant look, the purser told me that it was in with the red wine and to mix it like a screwdriver. I asked her what the stuff was and she told me she did not know herself but thought it was from Italy and knew that a lot of Germans like it. I took the bottle to my cart and mixed it as if I knew what I was doing. Handed it the customers and they were so pleased that I was able to provide them with their request.

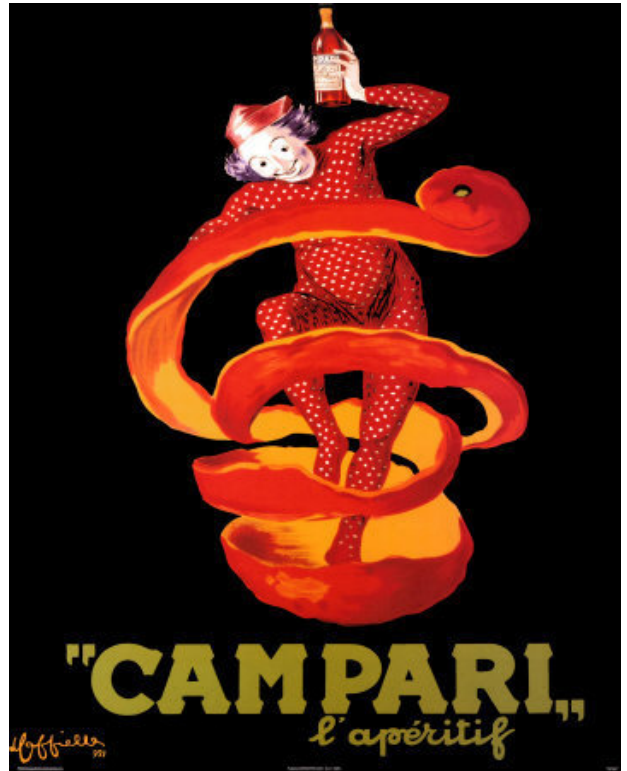
During the flight I asked several other flight attendants if they knew what Campari was and about half had never heard of it. The flight attendants that did know of it had no idea what it was made from. So I decided to research this mysterious drink called Campari when I got home.

Campari is an Italian liquor first distilled by Gaspare Campari in 1860. It is made by steeping a mixture of herbs in alcoholic spirits that create a strongly flavored and very alcoholic beverage. Campari is known as bitters, because they feature herbs and barks which give a distinctly bitter flavor to the beverage. Originally, bitters were developed for use as health tonics, and were often made with infusions of aromatic herbs so that they had a distinctive aroma and taste which made consumers feel like they were drinking a healthy beverage. Like other bitters, Campari has a strong aroma and a characteristic flavor which some consumers find overwhelming when consumed straight. For this reason, Campari is often mixed to create Campari Soda or other cocktails.

Although the exact ingredients in Campari are not known, the distinctive red color comes from cochineal dye, which is derived from an insect, *Dactylopius coccus*. Cochineal dye is used to dye many foods and drinks red, and is an ingredient that vegetarians should be aware of. Campari also contains cascarilla bark, a botanical product from the Bahamas. This bark has a characteristic strongly bitter flavor. The above mentioned components and other substances which make up Campari are steeped together in an infusion of bitter herbs, which is strained to remove particles of the plants before being bottled.

There are a number of ways to serve Campari. One of the most traditional is as an aperitif, a small drink served before a meal. Aperitifs are typically offered when guests are still milling, and signal that it is appropriate to begin consuming hors d'oeuvres and other appetizers. In this instance, Campari will be served in very small glasses, so that guests have a small sip of the beverage. The bitter flavor of Campari complements many appetizers, making it highly popular for this usage. In addition to mixing it with orange juice, as I did on the flight, a number of cocktails also call specifically for Campari, such as a Negroni. A

Negroni uses gin, sweet vermouth, Campari, and a twist of lemon. Campari is used in cocktails both for the distinctive flavor and the rich red color. Bartenders who like to experiment with their drinks sometimes enjoy playing with Campari, as it can add a fiery kick to a variety of drinks. Campari also appears in some iced desserts, such as sorbet. Alcohol is added to frozen desserts to change their freezing point, creating a different texture. Campari also has an impact on flavor and color, and is used judiciously.



"Campari ingredients use to have carmine. As of 2006 Campari now uses a red dye and not Carmine."



Carmine is actually Beetle Blood. They used this recipe for 150 years..."

Other drinks contain cochineal dye too...including some Sobe energy drinks and some Ocean Spray juices.

If you ever see an older bottle of Campari, with "Aperitivo" on the front label, it will say "Artificial Coloring" but it actually uses natural carmine. The label changed in the last few years to say "Bitters" on the front and on the back "Contains Natural Carmine" on the back label when the FDA changed their laws about labeling and artificial colorants.

So next time a passenger asks you for Campari and orange, you will know what they are asking for.

**By: Alex Baridon DTW F/A**