

The Original Southside cocktail is a glorious crash of flavors

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The Original Southside is an old Chicago cocktail. It's also, to be clear, threading a bunch of needles.

It's a prohibition-era recipe and it absolutely looks like one. Gin, lemon and mint -- basic flavors that could be friends or enemies. Then you've got the process of getting it into a can, keeping it shelf stable and introducing bubbles to the mix. Unlike the soft

landing spot of a low-alcohol seltzer that can be flattened with artificial flavors, it also clocks in at 10 percent alcohol by volume (ABV).

So, yeah, lots of moving parts. The degree of difficulty is high. Let's see if it sticks the landing.

The Original Southside gin cocktail: A

I'm drinking this the way gin drinks are meant to be enjoyed: outside on a warm day. Cracking the can unveils everything the can promises. Lemons, gin and mint, in that order. My brain is poisoned to process clean lemon and sharp booze as cleaning supplies, but that merely suggests I'm getting a drink that is lemony fresh.

The first sip is a perfect balance between lemon, mint and bubbles. The gin clocks in as well, but it's minimal -- especially for a cocktail that clocks in at 10 percent ABV. That raft of carbonation carries everything along wonderfully, giving you a slick, nearly creamy texture.

That would be for naught if the drink didn't taste good. But this is, to be clear, awesome. Lemon and mint sounds like a toothpaste nightmare. But here the mint adds an extra dimension to the reliable sweet/tart of lemonade. The Original Southside tosses an extra ingredient into the mix and it lands perfectly. This is crushable to the point of danger.

It's wonderful for hot day drinking but holds up in hoodie weather, too. It's clean and easy and finishes dry enough to keep you coming back. Gin is a delicate spirit that can be a detriment in the wrong combination. Southside turned it into an asset. This rules.