

San Jose, CA



How to sip your way skinny this summer



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All of the fun with none of the guilt: Diet-friendly drink mixers help you let loose this summer without completely derailing your healthy eating
Credits: ZilchMixers.com

Frozen drinks are a festive staple at many summer gatherings, but looks can be deceiving: One seemingly-innocent cocktail can pack anywhere from 400-700 calories, which will wreak havoc on even the healthiest of diets.

According to David Zinczenko and Matt Goulding, authors of the *Eat This, Not That!* series of books, liquid calories can account for as much as 20 percent of our daily intake. So if you're hoping to slim down this summer, think twice before casually tossing back cocktail after cocktail laden with sugar.

But fear not, my fellow fruity drink aficionados; thanks to enterprising mind Marcy Johnson, you can still manage to slim down while drinking up delicious margaritas and daiquiris this season. The Houston-based realtor has created [Zilch](#) drink mixers (\$5 for 10), sugar-, carb- and calorie-free blends that help skirt the diet issue without cheating on taste.

"As a woman in my fifties, I wanted to follow a healthier lifestyle, but I love Mexican food and margaritas," said Johnson. "But when I discovered that an 8 oz. Margarita has a whopping 550 calories, I knew I had to invent a sugar-free Margarita, or I would never be able to stick to any diet!"

What started as a personal quest for a great-tasting light margarita to pair with her favorite fare quickly morphed into a recipe for success that sprung straight out of her home kitchen. After testing existing mixers on the market, Johnson decided to concoct her own version that wouldn't compromise on taste (or distract with a bothersome aftertaste). Through a process of trial and error, she eventually settled on a powdered mix that uses Aspartame, the same calorie-free sweetener found in popular diet drinks. But little did Johnson know she struck liquid gold.

"What I came up with was a recipe for an authentic tasting, delicious, sugar-free margarita," said Johnson. "I began carrying my mix with me to parties and restaurants, and all of my friends and family were also drinking and loving this new sugar-free concoction."

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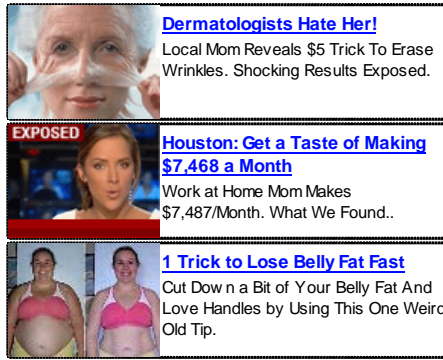
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The directions couldn't be easier, and Zilch even shares additional tips [here](#) on the website for perfecting your guilt-free versions of these crowd-pleasing drinks at home – or out on the town:

- At **home**, simply empty the contents of one margarita packet into glass. Add one jigger (1.5 oz) of your favorite tequila, stirring briskly until dissolved. Stir in 3/4 cup water and serve over ice.
- For **frozen margaritas**, empty the contents of three packets into a blender. Add 3/4 cup of tequila and 3/4 cup of water. Blend, gradually adding four cups of ice, until smooth.
- For a **pitcher**, empty the contents of five packets into a pitcher. Add one cup of tequila and stir well to dissolve. Stir in four cups water, and serve over ice.
- In a **restaurant or bar**, just order "tequila and water on the rocks," then add the contents of a single-serve packet. Continue stirring until completely dissolved, adding water to taste.

As for the verdict on taste, what started as a test turned into a full-blown cocktail hour at my house, so it's pretty safe to say that Zilch mixers more than make up in flavor what they lack in sugar, calories and carbs. And the best part? Zip, zero, and – yep, I'll say it – *zilch* guilt upon imbibing.

"When our family developed Zilch, we wanted to create a sugar free margarita that actually tasted like a real margarita," said Johnson. "We think our customers want the same thing."

To find a local retailer of Zilch click [here](#). The lightened libation hasn't made it to the San Jose area quite yet, so it's also available for purchase on the company website [here](#). For more information, visit [ZilchMixers.com](#).

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Jennifer Hellickson, an ACE-certified personal trainer and former writer for Windy City Sports and MetroSports New York magazines, attempts to...

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