





I didn't even know I could like bourbon until an *Edible* holiday party a few years back. Wine has owned my mind, heart and palate for years now, so I didn't even try it on the evening of the event. It wasn't 'til I got home with my clinking and clonking swag bag that I realized I was the proud owner of a bottle of Long Island Spirits' (<http://lispirits.com/>) Rough Rider double casked straight bourbon whiskey (<https://www.ediblelongisland.com/2013/05/07/local-bourbon-for-a-local-hero/>).

I put it aside for a while, until a friend who likes his bourbon came over for a party and, confident in my ability to impress (one of the bonuses of being part of the *Edible* team is always having reliable recommendations to make you look good – even in culinary areas you know little about), I cracked it open.

Well, that was a revelation. I poured myself a couple of fingers and stuck my nose right in. *Mmmmm, caramel. Mmmmmm, orange. Mmmmm, no searing of nasal passages.* I could like this.

It was love at first sip.



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It is unusual in its flavor profile. So much more peppery and citrusy and chocolatey than other bourbons I've tried. And that's in part why it was recently awarded a stellar score of 94 (Excellent, Highly Recommended) at the 2016 Ultimate Spirits Challenge (<https://www.ediblelongisland.com/2016/04/21/rough-rider-bourbon-scores-ultimate-spirits-challenge/>).

I loved the smoothness, the depth and roundness. So did my friends; they made a big dent in the bottle.

But a couple of drinks' worth remained. Before the bottle was all gone, it happened that I needed a little something festive to combat the cold of an outdoor village treelighting with friends and family. Something we could sip from travel mugs (wine from a travel mug is awful and red Solo cups lack discretion. And style.). Something uncomplicated because I am a lazy and often indifferent cocktail maker (ask anyone who had the misfortune to order anything but a bottle of beer during my bartender days at the late lamented musical biker dive, Diamond Lil's in Massapequa Park ca. 1987).

And thus was born the Bourbon Apple Cider – a drink that may be in need of a snappier name, but is ready in a pinch and tastes super delicious, even out of a travel mug. I am a big fan of apple cider; in winter we warm it up with cinnamon at breakfast or top it with prosecco for a quick aperitif (I call it Appelsecco).

A Bourbon Apple Cider is a snap to make: **Two parts not-too-sweet apple cider** (favorite local sources are Jericho Cider Mill(<https://jerichocider.com/>) in Westbury and Breeze Hill Farm Preserve(<http://www.breezehillfarmpreserve.com/>). farmstand in Peconic) **to one part Rough Rider Straight Bourbon shaken, poured out and sprinkled with cinnamon.** It's that simple.

Serve it up and watch your friends' skeptical eyebrows lift in surprise. It's really good; more complex than you'd expect, and refreshing and cozy at the same time. It is unfussy; mix it up by the pitcherful for a party (no ice needed) and it will magically disappear. Dress up your cocktails with cinnamon sticks or candy cane stirrers if you like; maybe the wintry weather will convince me to simmer it on the stove with more mulling spices. Or – remember I said I was a pretty lazy cocktail maker – maybe not. Sometimes — most of the time — simple is best.

*Don't know where to find Long Island Spirits distilled beverages? Try their nifty Spirits Locator (<http://lispirits.com/spirits-locator/>) tool. But do call ahead to whichever retailer is listed o make sure they have any bottles left!*



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