

As the owner of a cocktail bar, I'd first like to thank you for passing the original cocktails to go measure in December. Being able to practice the craft my staff and I are devoted to has been a salve on the extremely brutal year that 2020 turned out to be for everyone in our profession. As Expatriate continues to operate as a to go only operation due to the small size of the establishment and a paramount concern for public health, the ability to sell cocktails to go has been a much needed lifeblood. While Expatriate has a robust and much loved food program, over the eight years we've been open, we've historically done about 2/3 of our sales in alcohol and 1/3 in food. We are a bar at heart, and absolutely dependent on cocktail sales to survive. The pandemic has flipped this breakdown--this past weekend (we're only open for takeout three nights a week at this point) we did 2/3 of our sales in food and 1/3 in alcohol. We're happy to embrace this readjustment in order to survive. The important thing to note here though is that if we didn't have cocktails to go, I would have sold a decent amount of food, but would simply have done 2/3 of the sales I ended up with. Over time, the math on this could prove unsustainable. I pay all of my employees \$20 an hour plus tips, making myself less competitive in the bar/restaurant landscape as a matter of principle. In order to survive over the next few years, Expatriate will simply have to maximize sales. Even as Oregonians are safely able to return to bars, I know that there will be lingering effects of our collective experience of Covid-19. People will be less willing to cram themselves into a small room full of strangers. People will linger less, having only one round instead of two. As we make our way out of the pandemic, as individuals, communities, businesses, and as a state, the successful operation of bars and restaurants will be more challenging than it ever has been. Anything that can help with our bottom line, like the permanent implementation of cocktails to go, could make the difference between survival and insolvency. The bar business was already one of extremely small margins and constant struggle to make numbers add up prior to the pandemic. All that is to say, please make cocktails to go permanent. There is only an upside for those of us who make our living making cocktails. I'd also take great comfort in the fact that someone was having their second round from us on their couch instead of before getting into their car. Thanks for taking the time to read this!