

Scales, Enlightenment for the Cocktail Scene

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Would you enjoy more margaritas this Cinco de Mayo if there weren't so many calories per glass? Scott and Stephanie Meadows of Scales, the Skinny Cocktail Company, have just the mix for you.

Or should I say mixes? Scales also has a strawberry daiquiri, bloody mary, and sweet n' sour mix.

The Meadows' say just a few years ago, they were entertaining at home with friends. One guest lamented that cocktails would be more enjoyable if they didn't pack such a sugary, high calorie punch per drink. This spawned an idea for the couple to create a line of lighter drink mixes. In the process, they concocted something deliciously refreshing, tangy and gluten-free, with not one shot of guilt:

- Scales Bloody Mary Mix uses sea salt, includes Texas Pete and Lea & Perrins Worcestershire; it has no MSG. It has only 25 calories per serving, and only 200mg of sodium. Other bloody mary mixes have much higher calories and 610-900mg of sodium.
- The Strawberry Daiquiri mix has zero calories. Other brands average 183 calories.
- The Margarita has zero carbs, zero sugar, and only 5 calories or less per serving. Other brands contain anywhere from 113-180 calories.
- The Sweet n' Sour has zero carbs, zero sugar, and 5 calories or less per serving. Other brands contain anywhere from 113-180 calories.

Given its' health-conscious niche, it made sense to call it "Scales", but there's more to the name than that. Stephanie is a native of Myrtle Beach, and loves the coast. To reflect this love of the coast, each product label features a stylized rendering of a creature with scales—the bloody mary features an iguana, the strawberry daiquiri features a sea turtle, the margarita a tropical fish, and the sweet n' sour features an alligator. For years, the family lived in Charlotte, but it was really hard to be away from the smell of pluff mud, the laughter of seagulls, and the locals. Stephanie says, "People often asked me what I missed the most about Charleston, and I would always say the people that live here. The culture that is instilled in everyone cannot be found anywhere else. There is something about living here that grabs you and won't let go. Scott has always said I have saltwater running through my veins."

At 3 years old, Scales has a lot of people similarly 'hooked'. On March 29th, Kathie Lee and Hoda of The Today Show were delighted with the margaritas and bloody marys served during their 10am broadcast. Last summer, SELF magazine called Scales "their favorite bloody mary." Southern Living magazine listed Scales as "an absolute essential" for tailgating in their Best of the South October 2010 issue. Texas Pete hot sauce, a key ingredient in the Bloody Mary mix, confided to the Meadows' that many products had asked for a collaboration in their 75 year history, but no resulting cocktail had been worthy of their inclusion and co-branding until Scales. Now that's hot.

Scales has participated at a number of food, wine and charity events locally and nationally, including Charleston, Atlanta, Myrtle Beach, and just this past weekend, Buckhead. Scales has been a part of golf tournaments all over the country, including the Hackers for Hearts Golf Tournament for Yale-New Haven Hospital, Heritage Golf Tournament in Hilton Head, and the Hospitality Leaders Golf Tournament at the Sea Pines resort. In June, they will be a part of the

National Association of Specialty Foods Summer Fancy Food event in Washington, DC.

At this year's SEWE, Scales had the signature Bloody Mary at the Charleston Hospitality tent. At the Charleston Fashion Week Bridal show, they showcased 'the Stiletto' cocktail, made with strawberry daiquiri mix, pineapple juice, and champagne. Scott adds that rum can be used in lieu of champagne; it complements the pineapple and strawberry daiquiri mix really well.

Since they love to entertain, Scott and Stephanie shared suggested companion appetizers and entrees for each mix that I am gladly passing along:

“Scott and I usually pair our frozen strawberry daiquiri with appetizers like Grilled Peaches over Arugula, Goat Cheese and Prosciutto, or Tomato, Basil and Garlic Bruschetta. We always have a plate of sliced local pickling cucumbers, tomatoes, and homegrown basil from our own garden. These are finished with sea salt, fresh ground black pepper, a little EVOO and balsamic vinegar.

Our Sweet n' Sour is mixed with Bourbon. Our favorite meal pairing with it is Flank Steak on the grill topped with grilled summer corn (cut off the cob) and tomato relish. We serve this with a side of tangy mustard coleslaw.

Our margaritas are always accompanied with a little homemade salsa, followed by Mango Rice Salad with blackened tequila lime shrimp. This dish can be served cold or room temperature.

And finally, the Bloody Mary--it's what's for breakfast! Some of our favorite meal pairings are Shrimp and Grits, Crab Cake Benedict.”

Fans of Scales also contribute cocktail and food recipes and photos on Facebook or at live events; for example fans have suggested the sweet n' sour

mix in a "LillyPad" cocktail and for a lemon cake recipe. By “Liking” Scales on Facebook, fans can receive regular *Skinny Reports*: where to find Scales in stores and bars nationwide, where to find Scales at food events, charity events, in the media, and cocktail recipes, food recipes, and contests.

You can pick up Scales at Piggly Wiggly, Newton Farms, Harris Teeter, Boone Hall Farms, Bi-Lo, Kroger, Taste Charleston (downtown), Lowe's Foods in the PeeDee, and Food City in mid-Atlantic and Southern Midwest. Scales is available in 18 states right now, but that will jump to 30 by the end of June. They are served by the glass at all Wild Wing locations, Station 22, Bambu, Mac's Place, Fulton Five, Red's Ice House, and Charleston Area Marriott Hotels. You can also order bottles from their website at www.scalescocktails.com.

Cheers, and as Scales bottles' say, “scale back the calories, not the taste.” And remember to tip your servers, not the scales.

Kathleen Curry is a Lowcountry native an alumni of C of C, Carolina and Greenville Tech. In addition to contributing to Eat This! , Curry has a blog at bakingkookys.com; she is on twitter @BakingKookys and @ Currying_Favor.