

Happy Hour Encyclopedia Article

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Happy hour is the two-hour period before dinner when bars offer discounted alcoholic beverages. In the 1920s, "happy hour" was Navy slang for the scheduled period of entertainment on-ship. After the passage of the Volstead Act, civilians held "cocktail hours" at speakeasies, and in their own homes, to fortify themselves before dinner. Post-prohibition cocktail lounges continued the custom of pre-dinner cocktails. "Happy hour" became a common term around 1960; it appeared in a 1959 *Saturday Evening Post* article on military life. Owing its name to the word "happy" as meaning "slightly drunk," happy hour became known more as an after-work ritual, instead of a prelude to the evening. In the 1980s, bars offered complimentary hors d'oeuvres for happy hour, in response to the heightened enforcement of anti-drunk-driving laws. The military reflected these changes too, when in 1984, General John A. Wickham, Jr. abolished happy hours at United States military base clubs.

Further Reading:

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