

Photo: Andrew Thomas Lee

DRINKS Ikara

Chennai Central vodka cocktail from Ikara

By Sarra Sedghi · Rough Draft Atlanta, 10/20/2026

Makes 1 cocktail | **Prep** about 10 minutes | **Cook** about 20 minutes | **Total** about 1 hour

Servings and times are Rough Draft estimates.

Ingredients

COCKTAIL

- [ ] 2 ounces vodka
- [ ] 1 ounce strained rasam
- [ ] 3/4 ounce fresh lime juice
- [ ] 3/4 ounce honey syrup (1:1) honey and water
- [ ] large ice block
- [ ] 1 papadum crisp

RASAM BASE

- [ ] 2 medium tomatoes, chopped
- [ ] 2 Tbsp tamarind pulp
- [ ] 1 tsp black pepper
- [ ] 1 tsp cumin seeds
- [ ] 3 to 4 garlic cloves (optional)
- [ ] 1/2 tsp turmeric powder

Directions

1. **Start the rasam:** Crush pepper, cumin, and garlic coarsely. Combine tomatoes, tamarind, salt, and water in a pot. Simmer for 8 to 10 minutes.
2. Add the crushed spice mixture and cook for another 5 minutes. Add curry leaves.
3. **Temper the spices:** Heat ghee over medium heat in a tempering pot or small fry pan. Add a mustard seed or two to test heat; if the seeds pop or sizzle, the ghee is hot enough.
4. Add remaining mustard seeds and asafoetida and cover tempering pot or pan. Once all seeds pop, uncover the pan and reduce heat to medium-low. Add dried chilies and cover until fragrant.
5. Pour tempering into the rasam. Garnish with coriander and allow to cool.
6. Strain through a fine mesh strainer and chill until needed.
7. **Make the drink:** Add vodka, rasam, lime juice, and honey syrup to a mixing glass.

- [ ] 1 to 2 dried red chilies
- [ ] 8 to 10 curry leaves
- [ ] 2 cups water
- [ ] Salt, to taste
- [ ] 2 Tbsp chopped coriander leaves
- [ ] 1 tsp mustard seeds
- [ ] 1 tsp ghee
- [ ] Pinch of asafoetida (hing)

8. Fill with ice and stir for 20 to 25 seconds, until chilled and diluted.
9. Strain over a large, clear ice block in a rocks glass.
10. Garnish with a papadum crisp.

The story

This week, we're sharing a recipe for the Chennai Central cocktail from Indian restaurant Ikara, which opened earlier this year at Atlantic Station.

The Chennai Central combines vodka and honey with rasam, a traditional south Indian soup-like dish made with tomatoes, tamarind, and a spice blend. We've provided a recipe below to make rasam at home, but Indian grocery stores like Cherians or Patel Brothers also carry rasam.

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