

Hot Drinks

Maybe wine doesn't warm your taste buds. Cold winter nights call for something more conducive to warmth. Coffee and tea are fine for about the first month of cold weather, but so much raw, unadorned caffeine gets old after awhile. Or maybe the thought of something stronger running through your veins warms you to your toes. The following recipes are divided into alcoholic and non-alcoholic categories. To save your fingers, mix and serve them in heat-proof mugs or glasses.

CAFE HOLLANDER

2 tablespoons chocolate-mint liqueur
 2 teaspoons creme de cacao
 1 cup hot brewed coffee
 Whipped cream
 Chocolate curls
 For each serving, combine 1 tablespoon chocolate-mint liqueur and 1 teaspoon creme de cacao. Add 1/2 cup hot coffee to each; stir. Top each with a dollop of whipped cream. Garnish with chocolate curls. Makes 2 servings.

MOCHA RUM TODDY

1 teaspoon cocoa
 3 oz. strong hot coffee
 3 oz. scalded milk
 2 oz. rum
 Stir cocoa, coffee and cream in mug until cocoa is dissolved. Add rum. Garnish with whipped cream and a dash of grated nutmeg.

COFFEE GROG

1/3 cup packed brown sugar
 1 tablespoon butter
 1/8 teaspoon ground cinnamon
 1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg
 1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
 1/8 teaspoon ground allspice
 4 1/2 cups hot, strong coffee
 3/4 cup rum
 3/4 cup light cream
 6 orange or lemon peel twists
 In mixer bowl, cream together sugar and butter. Blend in spices till completely mixed. Add coffee, rum and cream till blended. Ladle mixture into coffee mugs; garnish each serving with an orange or lemon twist. Makes 6 servings.

SPICY HOT CHOCOLATE

2 tablespoons sugar
 2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
 2 inches stick cinnamon
 2 whole cloves
 1/4 teaspoon grated orange peel
 Dash of salt
 3 tablespoons water
 1 1/2 cups milk
 In small saucepan, combine sugar, cocoa powder, cinnamon, cloves, orange peel and salt. Blend in water. Bring to boiling, stirring constantly. Boil gently for 1 minute. Stir in milk; heat almost to boiling. Do not boil. Remove whole spices. Beat with rotary beater until frothy. Pour into 2 mugs or cups; sprinkle with ground nutmeg. Makes two servings.

SLIPPERY RUN

6 cups cranapple juice
 1 cinnamon stick
 Dash of ground ginger
 Rind of an orange
 1 tablespoon honey
 3 teabags
 Combine all except teabags in a saucepan. Bring to a boil. Remove from heat and add teabags. Cover and let stand five minutes. Remove teabags, cinnamon stick and orange rind. Serve.

SPICED O.J. WARM-UP

4 cups orange juice
 2 cups apple juice
 3 orange-and-spice teabags
 1 cinnamon stick
 Dash ground ginger
 Rind of one lemon
 Eye of newt (just kidding)
 Combine all ingredients and bring to a boil. Remove teabags and simmer five minutes. Remove cinnamon stick and lemon rind. Serve.



For the best of the worst

money, I might buy a bottle of it for myself. But it is just as easy to make sangria as it is to buy it at a local fine wine convenience store. Pour almost any bottle of dry red or white wine in a pitcher and add fruit and juice to taste. Taste was one of the strong points to both the Thunderbird and MD 20/20. In fact, it was too strong. This was my introduction to the infamous Thunderbird, a libation that has terrorized previous generations of god-fearing people. True to professional tasting canons, I opened the Thunderbird, let it breathe for a moment, then took a snort off the bottle. Because I wanted to adhere to the canons, I quickly moved to the door of my mobile home and spit the wine out. I immediately understood why professional tasters developed the custom.

a plaintive refrain: "I'd rather have a bottle in front of me, than have a frontal lobotomy." If Thunderbird is in the bottle, choose lobotomy. That left MD 20/20, known in the common tongue as Mad Dog 20/20, usually sold before its time. Again, because my palate is unpracticed, I couldn't discern this Mad Dog vintage, but I believe it was late October 1981. This wine is too young to remember anything. Its color approached red, but it more closely resembled grape soda. Unfortunately, Mad Dog tasted like grape soda, too. It was an unenviable taste sensation. The bouquet was fruity, yet heavy, the texture chewy, yet tough. But the price was right — \$1.99. If you would like to have a drunk that you just can't keep down, then Mad Dog is a perfect choice.

Two drinks — With the help of heavy food, this is drinkable.
Three drinks — After large amounts, perhaps with ice, this is tasty.
Four drinks — If you see an open bottle on the street, clean the opening and save.



Wine tasting terms

Bad — not the bad associated with basketball or football players. Dishwater with sugar could substitute.
Bouquet — When drinking good wine, a pleasant aroma. When drinking bad wine, better not to mention it. Your companions might insist on your walking home.
Dry — Not sweet, or none left.
Fat — Not the results of drinking too much, rather a heavy, sweetish wine.
Fruity — Yes.
Good — OK.

How to read the ratings

One drunk — Avoid if your budget allows.