

YUMMY NORTHWEST

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Another year for hot chocolate

This month **Yummy Northwest** is six years old! And of course we are celebrating with hot chocolate.

Here is a year's worth of **Yummy**-created recipes to enjoy. We recommend that you sip each beverage while enjoying that month's **Yummy Northwest**.

The year begins...

January - Egnog HC

One last cup of eggnog to toast the New Year . . . add chocolate for good luck.

In a large mug, whisk 1 tablespoon water together with 1 tablespoon cocoa powder. In a small pan, heat 1/2 cup eggnog and 1/2 cup milk. Stir the milk into the chocolate, add a small splash of vanilla (about 1/4 teaspoon), and sprinkle lightly with ground nutmeg (freshly grated is best).




A DELICIOUS BEGINNING: EGGNOG HOT CHOCOLATE


February - Three Loving Spoonfuls HC


Show your love with lots of chocolate.


In a small pan, heat 1 cup milk. Add 1 ounce bittersweet chocolate, 1 ounce milk chocolate, and 1 teaspoon cocoa powder and whisk until chocolate is smooth. Pour into two mugs (this is very rich stuff) and top with whipped cream (for a true love, whisk together 3 tablespoons whipping


Hot chocolate tips

 The essence of hot chocolate or hot cocoa is *chocolate*. You can skip on chocolate in many recipes, but don't do it here. Find the chocolate that tastes best to you and use that. Price doesn't matter—if you like what others describe as “cheap” or “inferior,” ignore them. And don't buy an expensive brand only because someone else recommends it.

 A liquid, usually milk, is the second most essential ingredient. Do a taste test to determine what kind of milk tastes best to you. Keep in mind that hot chocolate is a treat: enjoy it!

 If you can't drink cow's milk, experiment with soy milk, rice milk, coconut milk, or another dairy-free option. (For more ideas, go to godairyfree.org.) Some people drink chocolate “neat”—mixed only with water. Only you know what your health and taste require. That is the beauty of making hot chocolate yourself and not depending on a packaged mix.

 **White chocolate** really is a type of chocolate, if it contains *cocoa butter*. The higher cocoa butter is listed in the ingredients, the better the quality.

 When straining spices or flower buds, place a coffee filter in the strainer to make cleanup easier.

cream, 1 teaspoon cocoa, and 1 teaspoon sugar and then beat until fluffy). For an awesome finish, add a light touch of cocoa powder or chocolate sprinkles. Share with someone you love.

March - La-di-da HC

A special way to enjoy a Yummy birthday.

In a small pan, heat 1 cup milk and whisk in 1 tablespoon cocoa, 1 tablespoon Splenda, and 1 teaspoon cinnamon. When the mixture is hot, remove from stove and whisk in 1 teaspoon seedless raspberry jam. Pour into a china cup and sip with elegance.

April - Lavender-laced White HC

Edible flowers make a tasty spring treat.

In a small pan, heat 1 cup milk with 1 heaping teaspoon culinary lavender buds (put them in a tea ball for easy removal). Remove pan from heat and let steep for 5 minutes. Remove tea ball or pour milk through strainer to remove lavender, then return milk to the pan. Add 2 ounces white chocolate and whisk until chocolate is melted. Pour into a mug and sip while you imagine sitting in a flower garden.

Variation: Steep lavender for 8 minutes, and then substitute 1 ounce bittersweet chocolate for 1 ounce white chocolate.

May - “Hot” HC

Celebrate chocolate's Latin American roots.

Use a mortar and pestle or a coffee grinder to mix together: 3 tablespoons cocoa, 2 1/2 tablespoons brown sugar, 2 tablespoons finely chopped almonds, 1 heaping tablespoon cocoa nibs, 2 teaspoons cinnamon, 3/4 teaspoon allspice, 1/8–1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper, or to taste, and 1/2 teaspoon ground cloves.

Put 2 heaping tablespoons of this mixture in a small pan with 1 cup milk and heat gently for 10 minutes. Strain and pour into a mug.

This mixture makes enough for two cups.

June - Salted Caramel HC (salt optional)

Try something a little different.

In a small pan, heat 1 cup milk. Whisk in 1 ounce bittersweet chocolate until chocolate is smooth. Stir in 2 tablespoons caramel sauce and whisk until incorporated. Pour into a mug, top with whipped cream, and—if you're feeling adventurous—sprinkle lightly with coarse salt crystals. (Make your own caramel sauce:

elise.com/recipes/archives/001979caramel_sauce.php.)

July - Iced HC

Cool off with this refreshing beverage.

Make ice cubes: In a small pan, whisk together 1/2 cup milk, 1 tablespoon cocoa, and 2 tablespoons sugar and bring mixture to a simmer. Cool to room temperature, then pour into ice cube tray and freeze. (This will make about 10 ice cubes.)

When ice cubes are frozen, make a cup of cocoa using the same method except: use 1 cup milk, 1 tablespoon cocoa, and 1 tablespoon sugar and heat mixture only until warm, not hot. Pour warm cocoa over cocoa ice cubes in a tall glass and stir until cold.

August - Dairy-free HC

Even with special diet concerns, you can find refreshment with a special taste.

In a small pan, heat 1 cup vanilla soy milk (tester used Silk brand). Thoroughly whisk in 1 tablespoon cocoa. Pour into a mug, top with soy-based whipped topping if desired, and enjoy.

Note: If your brand of soy milk contains no sugar, whisk in 1 tablespoon sugar with the cocoa.

Variation: Substitute 1 tablespoon carob for cocoa. No sugar is needed even if you use plain soy milk, but you can add 1/2 to 1 teaspoon sugar or honey if you wish.

September - Extraterrestrial HC

Kids and aliens will both love this combination of chocolate and peanut butter.

In a small pan, heat 1 cup milk and whisk in 1 tablespoon cocoa and 1 tablespoon Splenda. When the mixture is hot, remove from stove and whisk in 2 teaspoons peanut butter. Sip with stars in your eyes.

The basics

Each recipe in this issue was developed to bring out the best of the flavors added. But you can substitute any of the three variations listed below.

Use what you have on hand if you can't get to the store for the specific chocolate recommended.

1. **Chocolate:** In 1 cup warm milk, melt 1 ounce of the chocolate of your choice, chopped for easier melting.

2. **Cocoa:** Begin by creating a paste in a large mug with: 1 tablespoon cocoa, 1–2 tablespoons sugar or Splenda, and 1 tablespoon water. This makes it easier to stir in 1 cup warm milk.

3. **Instant:** In these recipes, you can substitute 1 packet of powdered hot chocolate mix for 1 tablespoon cocoa and 1–2 tablespoons sugar.



The chocolate

Use any kind you like.

For testing purposes, we used Dilettante chocolate couverture, specifically meant for cooking and which melts easily. To find a store or order it online, go to dilettante.com.

Cocoa powder comes in all types and brands. In these hot cocoa recipes, the type of cocoa didn't seem to matter. If you're using hot water instead of milk, however, it might make a tremendous difference in flavor.

Experiment until you find something you like.

October - Spicy Autumn HC

Like pumpkin pie in a mug.

In a large mug, whisk 1 tablespoon water together with 1 tablespoon cocoa powder, 2 tablespoons sugar, and 1 scant teaspoon pumpkin pie spice*. In a small pan, heat 1 cup milk. Stir the milk into the chocolate mixture. Top with large dab of whipped cream and sprinkle lightly with cinnamon. Don't be stingy with the whipped cream on this drink—it really enhances the taste.

* You can buy this as is or make your own: 4 parts cinnamon + 2 parts ground ginger + 1 part cloves.

November - Cocoa with Rum

With or without the alcohol, enjoy this festive pick-me-up.

In a large mug, whisk 1 tablespoon water together with 1 tablespoon cocoa powder and 1 tablespoon well-packed brown sugar. Stir in 1 ounce rum or 1 teaspoon rum extract. In a small pan, heat 1 cup milk. Stir the milk into the chocolate mixture. Top with a small dab of whipped cream and sprinkle with brown sugar.

December - Peppermint HC

Use a peppermint stick or candy cane for a jaunty stirrer.

In a small pan, heat 1 cup milk. Whisk in 1 ounce milk chocolate until chocolate is smooth. Put 1/8 teaspoon peppermint extract into a mug and stir in hot chocolate. Top with whipped cream.



A TASTY END TO THE YEAR.

About Yummy Northwest

Each monthly issue highlights an edible delight available in the Pacific Northwest and Montana.

Contact the editor

Comments, corrections, topic ideas, and submissions are all most welcome at Yummy_Northwest@hotmail.com. View archives at yummynorthwest.com.