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Beverages to Toast the Holiday Season

By Arleen M. Kaptur

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Winter winds, crunchy snow, sledding, skiing, or whatever your cold weather activities are – nothing warms you and gives your body a lift like an aromatic hot beverage – sipped by an open fire, sitting in a cozy chair near the fireplace, or by a window watching the snow fall –

Holiday Coffee:

2/3 cup cocoa, 2 tsp. ground cinnamon, 1 tsp. salt, 2 14-oz. cans sweetened condensed milk, 8 cups water, 3 cups strong coffee, cinnamon sticks, ground nutmeg

Combine cocoa, cinnamon and salt in a large pot. Add sweetened condensed milk, stirring until smooth. Place pan over medium heat; gradually stir in water and coffee. Heat thoroughly but do not boil or the milk will curdle.

Garnish each serving with a cinnamon stick and sprinkle with nutmeg. Refrigerate leftovers if there are any.

Add 1 cup brandy and 1/2 cup light rum along with water and coffee if desired.

A touch of warmth – a bit of spice!

Hot Buttered Rum:

1 cup butter, softened, 1 cup firmly packed brown sugar, 2 cups sifted powdered sugar, 1-1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon, 1 pint vanilla ice cream, softened, 1-3/4 to 2 cups light rum, 7-1/2 cups boiling water, whipped cream, ground nutmeg, cinnamon sticks

Combine butter, sugar, and cinnamon; beat until light and fluffy. Add ice cream, stirring until well blended. Spoon mixture into a freezer container; and freeze until firm.

To serve, thaw mixture slightly. Combine butter mixture, rum, and boiling water; stir well. Top each serving with whipped cream and sprinkle with nutmeg. Serve with cinnamon stick stirrers, if desired.

An old-fashioned trip to flavor!

Wassail:

Peel of 1 lemon, 3 slices peeled fresh gingerroot, 1 stick cinnamon, 6 cups dry red wine or cranberry juice, 6 cups apple cider, 1/2 cup sugar, 2 oranges, unpeeled, cut into 6 wedges each, 36 whole cloves

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Place lemon peel, gingerroot, cinnamon and allspice on a small piece of cheesecloth or in a paper coffee filter.

Bundle up the corners and tie top with kitchen string, leaving excess string to hang out of pot for easy retrieval. Set sachet aside.

In a large pot, combine wine, apple cider, and sugar. Add sachet. Bring to boil over high heat stirring until sugar is dissolved. Cover. Reduce heat to medium–low. Simmer for 15 mins. Remove sachet.

Keep wassail warm over low heat.

While wassail simmers, stick 3 whole cloves into peel side of each orange wedge. Place one wedge in each serving cup and ladle hot wassail over top. Serve hot.

A Charles Dickens memory!

Hot Chocolate Supreme:

1 cup sugar, 1/2 cu unsweetened Dutch–process cocoa, 1/4 tsp. salt, 5 cups water, 2 cups milk, 1 cup heavy cream

In a pan, combine sugar, cocoa, and salt. Whisk in water. Bring to a boil over high heat, stirring until sugar is completely dissolved. Reduce heat to medium. Add milk and cream. Heat through. Keep warm over low heat.

Serve chocolate topped marshmallows or whipped cream sprinkled with crushed peppermint candies

To your delight – a toast!

Warm up to these wonderful Holiday beverages and toast your family, friends, and guests –

ENJOY!

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Arleen has written numerous books, cookbooks, articles, and newsletters:

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Wedding Toast Tips And Advice

By Melissa Burton

Wedding toasts perform an essential role during the wedding celebration. The wedding toast serves as a link between the formal wedding ceremonies and the less formal atmosphere of the wedding reception.

The wedding toast also allows some members of the family, relatives and closest friends to express their feelings and to wish the couple well.

Having toasts started from the belief that creating some noise, such as ringing a bell, in this case, the clinking of a glass, can cast away evil spirits.

The wedding toast may follow a traditional or a non–traditional order.

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In the traditional order, the first toast is the toast to the bride or the toast to the bride and groom. This is done by the best man, a relative or a friend. The groom then responds with a message to his bride, the person who made the toast, the couple's parents and a toast to the bridesmaids.

The best will then respond to thank the groom on behalf of the bridesmaids. At times, if the bride has spoken after the groom, the best man will thank the bridesmaids.

A close friend or relative may then follow with another toast. After this, the father of the bride thanks the guests on behalf of his wife and himself, and announces that they can begin with the celebration.

The non-traditional toast is done to do something different from the tradition. The order may be changed to suit the guests and the occasion.

The emcee proposes the first toast for the couple. The groom then thanks the emcee and the guests and toasts to his bride. The bride thanks her groom and the guests and proposes a toast to her parents and her in-laws. At times, a special toast may be done for her in-laws.

The father of the bride thanks the bride for the toast, thanks the guests for attending and announces that the celebration may begin. At times, the emcee may propose a toast to the bridesmaids, after which the maid of honor may respond with thanks or propose another toast. The emcee may introduce guests who will propose their toasts, and announce the beginning of the celebration.

Here are some tips when proposing a toast.

- * The bride should be served the beverage first, followed by the groom, the maid of honor, the parents and then the best man.

- * The toast can be done with a sip of wine, champagne or a non-alcoholic drink except coffee, tea and water.

- * If you will propose the first toast, make sure that not only your glass, but also all the other glasses are filled before you start speaking.

- * When proposing a toast, raise your glass with your right hand. The glass should be held in a straight line from the shoulder.

- * It is better to compose your own wedding toast. However, if you cannot write a good one, you can try traditional wedding toast but make sure to personalize it to include your feelings and thoughts about the bride and groom.

- * Always remember to end a toast with an invitation to the guests to join you and something that tells them what to say in response.

These are some things that one should remember when proposing a wedding toast. On the other hand, if you received a toast, you do not raise your glass, stand, nor sip your drink. You just thank the

toasters and although you are not required, you may propose another toast.

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