

Cupful of Merriment

Written by Debbi Covington
Tuesday, 02 December 2014 15:10



Come on over, the drinks are on the house! Festive beverages – hot or cold, spirited or nonalcoholic – will enliven any holiday gathering of friends and family!

What brings merriment better than a frothy glass of Southern Eggnog? What wards off Jack Frost quicker than a mug of Praline Coffee? Serve a cupful of Christmas cheer with these irresistible beverages. They're perfect for any holiday party and can easily be doubled or tripled for large gatherings. With a generous splash of your favorite spirits, these festive party sippers will spread the warmth of the season like a fleece blanket. Cheers!

Southern Eggnog

2 quarts milk, divided
12 large eggs, lightly beaten
1½ cups sugar
¼ teaspoon salt (optional)
2 tablespoons vanilla extract
¾ teaspoon ground nutmeg
1 cup bourbon

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2 cups heavy whipping cream, whipped

Freshly ground nutmeg, to garnish

Stir together 1 quart milk, beaten eggs, sugar and salt. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly in a large saucepan. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly about 25 minutes or until mixture thickens and coats the back of a spoon. (Do not boil.) Stir in remaining milk, vanilla and nutmeg. Pour into a large bowl or pitcher; stir in bourbon. Cover and chill for 4 hours. Fold in whipped cream just before serving. Pour into individual glasses and garnish with freshly ground nutmeg. Serves 15.



Praline Coffee

6 cups hot brewed coffee

1½ cups half and half

2/3 cup firmly packed light brown sugar

1 cup praline liqueur

Sweetened whipped cream

Heat coffee, half and half, and brown sugar in a saucepan over medium heat, stirring constantly, until heated through. Do not boil. Stir in praline liqueur and serve with sweetened whipped cream. Serves 6.

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White Christmas Punch

- 1 (12-ounce) can frozen lemonade concentrate, thawed
- 1 (48-ounce) bottle apple juice
- 1 (24-ounce) bottle white grape juice
- 1 (1-liter) bottle club soda, chilled

Stir together lemonade concentrate, apple juice and white grape juice; cover mixture and chill.
Stir in club soda just before serving. Serves 10 to 12.

Hot Buttered Rum

- 1 pound butter, softened
- 1 (16-ounce) package light brown sugar
- 1 (16-ounce) package powdered sugar
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 2 teaspoons ground nutmeg
- 1 quart vanilla ice cream, softened
- 2 quarts light or dark rum
- Boiling water
- Cinnamon sticks, to garnish

Beat butter, brown sugar, powdered sugar, cinnamon and nutmeg with an electric mixer until fluffy. Stir in vanilla ice cream and spoon into a freezer container. Cover and freeze for 8 hours. For one (1) individual serving: Combine $\frac{1}{4}$ cup ice cream mixture and 2 tablespoons rum in a large mug; stir in $\frac{3}{4}$ cup boiling water. Garnish with a cinnamon stick. Serves 18.

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Peppermint Patsy (pictured at top)

4 (1-ounce) envelopes hot chocolate mix

4 cups hot milk

1/3 cup peppermint schnapps

Sweetened whipped cream

Empty contents of hot chocolate mix envelopes into a large pitcher. Add hot milk to pitcher, stirring until hot chocolate mix dissolves. Stir in peppermint schnapps. Pour into 4 mugs and top with sweetened whipped cream. Serves 4.

1 quart apple cider

1 quart cranberry juice drink

1/4 cup firmly packed brown sugar

1 teaspoon whole cloves

2 (3-inch) cinnamon sticks

1 small lemon, thinly sliced

Cinnamon sticks, for garnish

Bring cider, cranberry juice, brown sugar, cloves cinnamon sticks and lemon slices to a boil in a Dutch oven, stirring often; reduce heat and simmer 15 to 20 minutes. Discard spices and lemon. Garnish individual servings with cinnamon sticks. Serves 8.



Scarlett O'Hara

12 ounces Southern Comfort

Cranberry juice

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12 slices fresh lime

Fresh cranberries, frozen

In a glass pitcher, combine Southern Comfort and cranberry juice to taste. Pour into individual glasses. Squeeze a slice of lime into each cocktail before serving. Garnish with 4 to 5 frozen cranberries. Serves 12.

The writer owns Catering by Debbi Covington and is the author of two cookbooks, Gold



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