

HOT CHOCOLATE, FULLY



THE COOKFUL

Edited by Lyndsay Burginger and Christine Pittman

Hot Chocolate, Fully

Love hot chocolate? You've come to the right place. Living in Florida, one of the things I miss is the extreme change of seasons. There's no first warm spring day. And there's no first snowfall of the year. Since there's no big change outside, I try to recreate the feeling of the seasons with food and drink.

Nothing puts me in mind of the first snowfall like hot chocolate polka-dotted with marshmallows. Give me that mug, a sweater and Baby It's Cold Outside from the speakers and I'll completely forget that it's 90 degrees outside.

It's this love of hot chocolate, the recognition that it triggers memories of ice skating, sledding, snow-angels, caroling and fireplaces for so many people, that made us decide to do a whole topic about it. For the next 17 days we're talking about hot chocolate non-stop. You won't believe the things we have to share on this rich and creamy topic.

We have a basic hot cocoa recipe and one using real chocolate (and a comparison between the two so you know which is best), a seriously decadent slow cooker hot chocolate for a crowd, frozen hot chocolate, hot chocolate cake, a comparison of store-bought hot chocolate brands, a DIY hot chocolate bar and even a big homemade marshmallow extravaganza. And so so much more. It's pretty insane. OK, let's get cozy and chocolatey together!

Christine ;)



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Edited by Lyndsay Burginger and Christine Pittman. Designed by [Garnishing Co.](#)

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The Hot Chocolate Lovers' Gift Guide

By Lyndsay Burginger

Hot Chocolate is a crowd-favorite, especially during the colder seasons. Here at The Cookful we are proud to present some of our favorite Hot Chocolate essentials, ranging from well needed items to fun and funky gifts to give to the hot-chocolate-lover in your life.

Whether you're making Hot Chocolate for a crowd (using a large [Hot Water Dispenser](#)) or making it using a fun automatic [Hot Chocolate Maker](#), it's assumed you'll want to add some fun flavors to your drink. Try stirring in some sweetness with these [Rock Candy Stirrers](#) or even a hint of mint with these cool [Candy Cane Spoons](#).

While you can make your own mix with our help, or even use a pre-made mix, why not warm up some milk and add in these [Hot Chocolate Sticks](#), which are essentially a condensed, very chocolatey, hot chocolate mix. It'll be the perfect combo with these adorable [Marshmallow Mugs](#).

Hot Chocolate Lovers' Gift Guide

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You can even top off your mug with tasty [Bourbon Flavored Marshmallows](#) or grate a bit of [Extra Dark Chocolate](#) on top for an even deeper chocolate flavor.

Why not give your lover a fun [Hot Chocolate Basket](#) filled with hot cocoa mixes and little chocolate goodies? Or perhaps they love National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation? Add some Griswold family spirit with these [Moose-Shaped Mugs](#).

Feeling a bit spicy? Try making a Mexican Hot Chocolate (keep an eye out for the recipe further in our series) with a traditional [Mexican Chocolate Bolita](#) (Mexican chocolate squares). Then use an Aztec-inspired [Molinillo Frother](#) to create the biggest mug of foamy hot chocolate.

Looking for the perfect homemade gift to give away at your next holiday party? Make a batch of our Hot Chocolate mix and pour it into a [Mason Jar](#). Add some cute [Holiday Ribbon](#) to make your gift extra festive.

And I don't know if you've heard yet, but some of your favorite candies have gotten bit by the hot chocolate bug. That's right, [Hot Chocolate M&M's](#) and [Hot Chocolate Chips Ahoy Cookies](#) are going to be all the rage this season. Pick up a bag before they're all gone.

How To Make Hot Cocoa

By Christine Pittman



Step 1: Grab your favorite mug from the cupboard. The bigger the better. Add some sugar for to the bottom of the mug. cocoa powder is quite bitter so you may need more sugar than you realize. I go with 2 tablespoons of sugar for 1 tablespoon of cocoa.



Step 2: Then add some unsweetened cocoa powder, 1 tablespoon. Try using a dark chocolate variety for an intense cup.



Step 3: A little splash of milk just to incorporate the dry ingredients, 1-2 tablespoons. I choose whole milk when I have it because it makes the cocoa rich and creamy.



Step 4: Stir together until no lumps remain and the mixture is smoooooth. It should be thick and dark.



Step 5: Slowly stir in the remaining milk until incorporated.



Step 6: Pop it in the microwave for a minute then stir to distribute the heat. Place it back in the microwave and cook for another 30 seconds or until the cocoa is nice and hot.



Easy Hot Chocolate with Real Chocolate

By Christine Pittman

This is the real deal. No hot chocolate mixes here!

If you're not into the more bitter flavor of hot cocoa, you're going to love this chocolate chip version. You can get whatever kind of chocolate chips you like. I prefer dark chocolate so I go with those. If you like a sweeter creamier hot chocolate, then try milk chocolate chips.

All you do to make this hot chocolate is to pour milk into a mug and then microwave it until very hot. Scoop in the chocolate chips and some sugar. Stir until it's combined. Drink.

Easy Hot Chocolate

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Yield: 1 serving

Prep Time: 1 minute

Cook Time: 2 minutes

Total Time: 3 minutes

Ingredients:

1 cup milk

2 Tbsp. chocolate chips

1 tsp. granulated sugar

pinch of salt

1. In mug, add milk and heat in microwave until hot but not boiling (1 minute to 1 minute 30 seconds).
2. Add chocolate chips and sugar to the mug. Stir together until the chocolate is melted and very well mixed. Add a pinch of salt and stir.



Slow Cooker Hot Chocolate

By Christine Pittman

Rich. Decadent. Hot. Steamy and soooo easy. Learn how to make a big batch of hot chocolate for a crowd in your slow cooker.

When you want to make a big batch of hot chocolate the last thing you want is to have to stand at the stove stirring for ages. Using the slow cooker takes all that stir-time out of it. And it makes a pretty darned good hot chocolate too. This recipe is particularly luxurious because it has both whipping cream and sweetened condensed milk in the mix. Thick, creamy and delicious.

Here's what you do: Measure whipping cream, sweetened condensed milk, milk and chocolate chips into the slow cooker. I used my [Hamilton Beach 6 Quart Slow Cooker](#). A pinch of salt, some vanilla and an optional cinnamon stick or two go in as well. Then you put it on low for at least 2 hours. Every 30 minutes or so give it a stir and then cover it back up again. Give it a good whisking and it's ready to serve.

Slow Cooker Hot Chocolate

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Sometimes a thin layer of chocolate doesn't fully incorporate on the top. That's fine. No worries.

After the two hours on low, you can set the slow cooker to a warm setting, if your machine has one. It will keep it at a really warm drinking temperature for hours so you can go back for more. And more. And more.

Looking for a bit of variety? Try adding these to your hot chocolate to make it extra special:

- + Substitute 1 cup of butterscotch chips for 1 cup of dark chocolate chips
- + Use white chocolate chips
- + Use milk chocolate chips
- + Add a dash of peppermint extract
- + Add caramel chewy candies and sprinkle mugs with salt
- + Add a chili pepper in the pot with extra cinnamon sticks
- + Serve with a side of raspberry liqueur

Yield: 10-12 servings

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cook Time: 2 hours

Total Time: 2 hours, 5 minutes

1. Add all ingredients into slow cooker and whisk until combined. Cook on low and stir occasionally. Cook until chocolate chips are melted and beverage is hot, about 2 hours. Whisk again to really combine.
2. Ladle into mugs and top with marshmallows.

Ingredients:

1 1/2 cups whipping cream
1 (14 oz.) can sweetened condensed milk
8 cups milk
2 tsp. vanilla extract
3 cups dark chocolate chips
2 cinnamon sticks (optional)



Hot Chocolate vs. Hot Cocoa

By Christine Pittman

It's the battle of the season: Hot Chocolate versus Hot Cocoa. Where do you stand?

If you're making hot chocolate the homemade way, not from a store-bought mix, you probably wonder what the best option is, cocoa or real chocolate. We made some of each (we gave you the recipes earlier in this book) and did the taste test to find out.

We went with Hershey's Special Dark Cocoa and Special Dark Chocolate Chips so that we are looking at a similar flavor profile. And that's what I typically buy so I know it's all good.

They're both good, for sure. We preferred the cocoa version. Looking at the picture at the top of this article, that's the one on the left. It has a nice dark color (although the foam on the chocolate one is pretty nice too!). More importantly, it has a richer flavor and smoother thicker mouth feel.

The cocoa was more bitter and more chocolaty even though the recipe contains more sugar.

Hot Chocolate vs. Hot Cocoa

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The version made with chocolate chips was overly sweet even with very little sugar added.

Our choice is therefore definitely the cocoa. O.K., but what about if you add other ingredients to your mug. Does that make a difference in what we choose?

While preparing this hot chocolate book, we read many many hot chocolate and hot cocoa recipes. Interestingly, many of them call for vanilla and/or salt. Neither of our recipes included these ingredients, but we thought it would be cool to try adding them here and seeing if they affect the two different types differently.

They did!

The salt made a big difference in the chocolate chip version. Just a pinch of salt and some of the overkill sweetness went away. The difference was much less noticeable in the cocoa version.

As to the vanilla, it added a subtle but nice bit of round flavor to the mug of cocoa. But when added to the chocolate chip cup, it was overpowering. You could really taste vanilla, even with just 1/8 of a teaspoon.

There you have it, the perfect cup of hot chocolate for us is going to be one made with cocoa and containing a tiny bit of vanilla. Do you think this would be your favorite too or do you lean in a different direction?

5 Decadent Milk Infusions to Upgrade Your Hot Chocolate

By Maria Siriano

Infuse huge flavor into your Hot Chocolate with a few simple steps.

Our favorite thing about making homemade hot chocolate is that you can flavor it a bajillion different ways just by throwing things you have around the kitchen into some warm milk. Whole spices, tea, coffee, fruit, shoe leather... you name it, you can make your hot chocolate taste like it.

Milk infusions are the key to super special hot chocolate, and it's ridiculously easy to do. Plus it'll only take you an extra 15-30 minutes of waiting while you steep your ingredients in the milk. Patience is a virtue, and it totally pays off. Promise.

We came up with five variations for you to try this winter, ranging from the simple but classic Star Anise & Cloves to the tropical (Passion Fruit & Ginger) and the ultra-trendy Hazelnut & Burnt Vanilla Bean for all you hipsters out there. If you don't want to give up your tea or coffee for hot chocolate, why not marry the two with our Spicy Coffee or Lemon Earl Grey varieties? Chocolate and caffeine are a sure bet for a great morning. And yes, we definitely advocate for morning cocoa.

Here are our five favorite milk infusions, with the recipe to follow:



1. STAR ANISE & CLOVES

1 whole star anise pod + 6 whole cloves (steep 15 minutes)

Hot Cocoa with Infused Milk

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2. LEMON EARL GREY TEA

2 tablespoons Earl Grey tea + 1 large slice lemon rind (steep 15 minutes)



3. SPICY COFFEE

2 tablespoons espresso beans + 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes (steep 20 minutes)



4. GINGER PASSIONFRUIT

Pulp and seeds from 1/2 passion fruit + 1-inch slice of fresh ginger (steep 30 minutes)



5. HAZELNUT & BURNT VANILLA BEAN

1/3 cup chopped toasted hazelnuts, skins removed + 1 vanilla bean, split in half lengthwise and torched in a flame (steep 30 minutes)

Hot Cocoa with Infused Milk

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Yield: 2 servings

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cook Time: 15-30 minutes

Total Time: 30 minutes

Ingredients:

2 cups whole milk (non-dairy
milks work, too)

Infusion Ingredients (see
Infusion Varieties, above)

2 tablespoons unsweetened
cocoa powder

2 tablespoons granulated
sugar

1. In a small saucepan, bring milk to a bare simmer over medium-low heat. Remove the pan from the heat and add your infusion ingredients. Cover the pan and let steep for 15-30 minutes (see recommended times for each variety above). Return the pan to medium heat and whisk in cocoa powder and sugar until dissolved and the hot chocolate is steaming. Divide between two mugs and serve immediately.



DIY Hot Chocolate Toppings Bar

By Meghan Bassett

Our guide to the best ever DIY hot chocolate bar is going to be the biggest party hit you've ever seen.

By far my favorite part about serving hot chocolate is when I set up a ridiculous, over-the-top hot chocolate bar for a party. Putting together a hot chocolate bar is ideal for family get-togethers, cookie exchange parties or any holiday merriment you have planned during the winter.

Hosting a DIY hot chocolate bar is surprisingly simple. You can decorate to make it a winter wonderland, or you can keep things chic and simple. It's up to you how "all out" you want to go. Either way, our guide to the best ever DIY hot chocolate bar is going to be the biggest party hit you've ever seen.

DIY Hot Chocolate Toppings Bar

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What You'll Need:

MUGS

The options are endless when it comes to hot chocolate mugs. You can keep things simple with all matching mugs or try mixing it up with different styles of mugs for a more eclectic look. You can even go the whimsical route and break out the holiday-themed mugs to hammer home the holiday cheer that much more.

HOT CHOCOLATE – MAKE OR MIX?

Make your own hot chocolate mix or head to the store and grab a few different kinds of mixes. They come in fun flavors such as white, dark and milk chocolate. All you need to do is have warm milk and/or water nearby for guests to make their own personal mug of hot chocolate.

TOPPINGS

For a DIY hot chocolate bar, the rule is: the more toppings the better! Bringing out a wide variety of toppings allows everyone to get creative. Plus walking in and seeing such an impressive spread is sure to illicit some ooooo's and ahhhh's.

Here are just some of my favorite hot chocolate toppings:

- + White, Dark, and Milk Chocolate Chips
- + Cocoa Puff cereal
- + Grated Cinnamon
- + Sprinkles
- + Hot Tamales
- + Peanuts
- + Peanut Butter
- + Sweetened Coconut Shavings
- + Marshmallows – Regular, Mini and Fruit-Flavored
- + Candied Ginger
- + Crushed Peppermint Sticks
- + Whipped Cream
- + Caramel Sauce
- + A Variety of Chocolate Bars – Orange, Chili, Salted Caramel, etc.

DIY Hot Chocolate Toppings Bar

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STIRRERS

Ditch the plain ol' spoons and opt for something a little more fun. It is a party after all! Use silly straws, cinnamon sticks, candy canes, and long cookies (think Pirouettes) as the stirrers for all of your hot chocolate concoctions. Why miss out on an opportunity to add even more flavor to your cup?

ADULTS ONLY

If this is an adults-only DIY hot chocolate bar, break out the spirits! Have a little vodka, bourbon and whiskey handy to make your cups of joy even warmer. If straight-up spirits are not enough for you and your boozy friends, head to the flavored vodkas section in your local liquor store. There's every flavor imaginable out there now, so have some fun with cherry, whipped cream and caramel flavored vodkas. And then there are all the liquors like Irish cream, amarula and frangelico to For even more boozy Hot Chocolates, stay tuned for our Boozy Hot Chocolate Guide. We've earned our right to boozy hot chocolate as adults, haven't we?

THE LITTLE EXTRAS

It's the little extras that pull a DIY hot chocolate bar together. Whether you're using stickers, mini chalkboards or dry erase markers on empty dollar store frames (a quick and easy DIY!), give your hot chocolate bar a little extra something by labeling all the goodies you have out there. Don't forget to include labels for people's mugs so there are no mix-ups!

Now that you've got the keys to the DIY hot chocolate kingdom, all that's left to do is plan your party!



Quick & Easy Frozen Hot Chocolate

By Christine Pittman

If you live in a warm climate, you'll love this hot drink made slushie-style. Heck, you'll love it even if there's snow on the ground. Pinky swear.

So you want a frozen hot chocolate with a rich deep chocolate flavor. You're going to use cocoa for that. But if you use cocoa, then you need to dissolve it in milk and heat it. You'd probably better cool it down at that point otherwise your ice is going to melt when you blend it. If the ice melts, then you won't have slush. Just watery chocolate milk. Ew.

So what do you do to get rich chocolatey flavor in your frozen hot chocolate without having to heat and then cool your base? We figured it out!

You mix the cocoa with sugar and then with a small amount of milk, 2 tablespoons to start and then another half cup. You microwave that until good and hot and stir it. Add chocolate chips to it and stir. Those chips are going to bring the temperature of the cocoa down quite a bit.

Frozen Hot Chocolate

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Now you have a thick chocolate goop. Add that to a blender with another cup of cold cold milk. Now it's barely warm at all. Throw in your ice cubes and blend until all mixed up and slushie.

Top it off with some whipped cream (get the goods on making [perfect whipped cream here](#)) and chocolate shavings (we make ours using [a basic potato peeler like this](#)). Slurp!

Yield: 4 servings

Prep Time: 1 minutes

Cook Time: 1 minutes

Total Time: 2 minutes

Ingredients:

1 1/2 cups + 2 Tbsp. cold milk

2 Tbsp. cocoa powder

1 Tbsp. granulated sugar

3 Tbsp. chocolate chips

3 cups ice

[whipped cream](#)

chocolate shavings

1. In mug, mix together 2 Tbsp. milk, cocoa and sugar to form a paste. Add 1/2 cup of the milk and microwave 30 seconds. Stir, then microwave for another 30 seconds until hot but not boiling.
2. Add chocolate chips and stir until melted. Pour into blender with remaining 1 cup of cold milk and ice. Blend.
3. Top with whipped cream and chocolate shavings. For decorative curls use a potato peeler on a square of chocolate and shave onto the whipped cream.



How to Make Marshmallows

By Christine Pittman

Marshmallows on hot chocolate: Yay or Nay? Never mind. If you use homemade ones, it's definitely yay. These things are too good for anyone to turn down. Find out how to make these homemade mini marshmallows from scratch. Your hot chocolate will give you a big Mwah!

OK, so this is funny to me. Back when The Cookful launched in September we did a series on Popcorn that included [a traditional popcorn ball recipe](#). I was super-nervous about creating that recipe because it involved candy-making. But I did it, discovered it wasn't that hard and told you about it.

Then for our Candy Apple series I took my candy thermometer out again to make [that bright red candy coating](#). I was positive it would be a disaster but again, easy and even fun.

So how do you think I felt when it was time to tackle marshmallows? Still nervous. Really nervous. I mean, sure. I know how to make a candy syrup now. But marshmallows? That's

Homemade Marshmallows

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gotta be crazy-hard. Riiiiight??? Nope. Sooo easy. The marshmallows were actually super-fun to make and totally worth the time it took.

Homemade marshmallows are admittedly a tad time-consuming. But they taste loads better than store-bought. It's also a really cool process to make them. If you're the kind of cook who likes trying new techniques and getting in there to see how something's made, this project is all you.

OK, here we go. How to make homemade mini-marshmallows:



Step 1: To a stand mixer, add unflavored gelatin powder.



Step 2: Ice down some water.



Step 3: Measure it, being sure not to include any ice cubes.



Step 4: Pour it in!

Homemade Marshmallows

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Step 5: Now hands off. Let the gelatin bloom while you work on your candy syrup.



Step 6: Oh, but do get that whisk attachment all set up and ready. Just don't turn it on yet.



Step 7: OK, that candy syrup: To a small saucepan add granulated sugar.



Step 8: Add in some light corn syrup. This is used to prevent the sugar from crystalizing and making a crunchy and hard marshmallow, yuck.



Step 9: Cover and cook on medium-high for 5 minutes.



Step 10: Meanwhile, in a separate bowl add cornstarch.

Homemade Marshmallows

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Step 11: Mix in some confectioner's sugar (a.k.a. powdered sugar or icing sugar). Set this aside. You'll need it later on. (It's going to be used for dusting the marshmallows to stop them from sticking to everything).



Step 12: After the 5 minutes, uncover the saucepan.



Step 13: Use a candy thermometer and watch the numbers closely. 240°F is the magic number you are looking for. Once it reaches this, take it off the heat immediately.



Step 14: Let's go back to the gelatin. It's all bloomed by now.



Step 15: With the mixer running, slowly pour in the candy syrup slowly down the side of the bowl. Don't splash too much otherwise the candy will start to set up, leaving crunchy little bits.



Step 16: Turn up the speed, full blast!

Homemade Marshmallows

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Step 17: While the mixer is running, spray a parchment lined 13X9 pan.



Step 18: Remember that cornstarch mixture from earlier? Sprinkle a little bit of that on.



Step 19: Looks like the marshmallows are all mixed! It takes about 12-15 minutes. You want a nice thick sticky mixture that is still slightly warm.



Step 20: Use an oiled spatula to transfer the mixture to a ziploc bag or a pastry bag. I use baking spray to oil the spatula. And keep it handy. You can spray the spatula more (even spray onto your marshmallow coated spatula, that's fine!) if it starts sticking some more.



Step 21: Squeeze all the marshmallow into the bottom of the bag.



Step 22: Then snip off the end. You want it a bit bigger than 1/4-inch.

Homemade Marshmallows

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Step 23: Pipe equal lines on the parchment-lined sheet pan.



Step 24: Dust with cornstarch and powdered sugar. Let the marshmallows sit for 4 hours or overnight.



Step 25: You can also be creative and pipe out some fun designs. The key is to have oil on your hands as you squeeze out the marshmallow. Your oiled fingers can then move and place the stream more easily into fun shapes. If you're doing a lot of shapes like this, put a small bowl with oil in it near where you're working. That way you can keep dipping your fingers in as needed.



Step 26: After the marshmallows are ready, use a pizza cutter to slice. Start with a single strip by itself. This will give you an idea of the size you want.



Step 27: Then line up 4 or five strips.



Step 28: Cut, cut, cut!

Toss the marshmallows with more of the cornstarch mixture
Make a mug of hot chocolate and plop them in!

Homemade Marshmallows

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Step 29: if you want BIG marshmallows in your hot chocolate there's another method you can use. This is actually less time-consuming than the mini-marshmallows. First start off by spraying a 13X9 pan.



Step 30: Dust with the cornstarch mixture. Get it in all the nooks and crannies.



Step 31: Like fresh snowfall.



Step 32: Spread the marshmallow mixture in the pan. Again, you'll want an oiled spatula for this. And spray it some more to make spreading easier.



Step 33: Spread it alllll even.



Step 34: After letting the mixture set for 4 hours or overnight, flip the pan over.

Homemade Marshmallows

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Step 35: Now that's one giant marshmallow!



Step 36: Cut strips with a pizza cutter. You decide the size.



Step 37: Cut into squares.



Step 38: Look at them all!



Step 39: Toss with more of the cornstarch mixture to prevent sticking.



Step 40: Enjoy!

Boozy Hot Chocolate Guide

By Meghan Bassett

Calling all grown ups! Give your hot chocolate a massive upgrade: Add booze. Here's our boozy hot chocolate guide.

The warmth from hot chocolate and a little spike of spirits is just what you need when cuddling by the fire. But what to spike your hot chocolate with? You could simply pour in some vodka and call it a day, but you're classier than that, aren't you? You not only want that extra warmth in the cup, you want to enjoy a flavor explosion with every sip too.

That's exactly why we've put together the ultimate boozy hot chocolate guide for you. These hot chocolate and liquor combinations are the best of the best. There's no better way to warm up from the inside out!



Top Ten Hot Chocolate & Booze Pairings

1. PEPPERMINT

Starting this countdown with the most classic combination of peppermint and chocolate seemed to make the most sense. It doesn't matter if you're diving into a cup of white, dark or milk hot chocolate, topping off with a little peppermint schnapps works with any flavor.

2. COFFEE

Want a bit of a mocha spin on your hot chocolate tonight? Go for the dark or milk hot chocolate, then add in some coffee liquor like Kahlua. It's the best cup of boozy hot faux Joe you'll ever taste.

Boozy Hot Chocolate Guide

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3. CINNAMON

With all those cinnamon candles burning in every store around the holidays, it's impossible to resist the call of cinnamon. Grab some Fireball and spike that milk hot chocolate like it's hot (see what I did there?).

4. COCONUT

If you're a fan of Mounds or Almond Joy, then you need to be adding some coconut rum to your hot chocolate. No matter what type of hot chocolate you're whipping up, the coconut will turn your mug of chocolate into a liquid candy bar.

5. PEANUT BUTTER

Craving a peanut butter chocolate combination? Who isn't??? Spike your hot chocolate with some vodka and stir in a tablespoon of peanut butter. You can pair this combination with any type of hot chocolate and you won't even miss dessert.

6. HAZELNUT

Nutella is an addictive spread and I can't help but figure out a way to get it into my hot chocolate. Use dark or milk hot chocolate and go in with some hazelnut liquor. If you really want to go over-the-top with it, add in a tablespoon of Nutella. Talk about WOW.

7. CARAMEL

If you're sensing a theme of turning candy into hot liquid love, you're correct. As a chocolate covered caramel addict, I love to add a little spiced rum and caramel sauce to my milk hot chocolate.

8. MARSHMALLOW

Yes, you can add marshmallows to your hot chocolate, but wouldn't it be better if your hot chocolate tasted like a chocolate-covered marshmallow? The answer is yes. Duh. Adding some whipped cream vodka to white hot chocolate makes the perfect marshmallow flavored cocktail.

Boozy Hot Chocolate Guide

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9. IRISH HOT CHOCOLATE

Step aside Irish coffee, there's a new Irish cocktail in town and it's got chocolate. Spiking your hot chocolate with some Bailey's makes a smooth and dreamy cocktail that will quickly outpace that Irish coffee that's your normal post-dinner go-to.

10. MEXICAN

Turn up the heat! Spicy cocktails seem to be all the rage right now, so bring the craft spicy cocktail home and into your hot chocolate mug. Top off your dark or milk chocolate with vodka and a pinch of cayenne powder. Or get yourself some Absolut Peppar and go bang with that.

OK, there's my list. Now here's what you need to do. Choose one. Make it. Grab a blanket. Snuggle.

Do it.

You know you wanna ;)



Spicy Homemade Mexican Hot Chocolate Mix

By Christine Pittman

Hot Tamales! This spicy Hot Chocolate gets its kick from cayenne pepper and cinnamon.

A hit of spice with chocolate has been all the rage for a few years ago, and with good reason. The sharp spike of heat makes the chocolate seem richer. When in hot chocolate, it also makes the drink seem hotter and more soothing. It's a bit like spiking a hot drink with booze where you get that burn down your throat. So great, right?

Here's how to do a nice spicy Mexican-style hot chocolate at home. You can make a batch for yourself or take it as a gift over the holidays. It's really easy. When you want to make a cup, just spoon the mix into a mug and add hot milk or hot water.

Slurp! Mmmm gotta love that burn.

Mexican Hot Chocolate Mix

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Yield: 16 servings

Prep Time: 2 minutes

Cook Time: 0 minutes

Total Time: 2 minutes

Ingredients:

2 cups hot chocolate powder
(such as Quick)

1/4 cup cocoa

2 tsp. ground cinnamon

a pinch of cayenne pepper
(optional)

2-3 cinnamon sticks
(optional)

1. Mix all ingredients except for the cinnamon sticks together in a jar.
2. Add the cinnamon sticks to the jar as decoration, if you'd like. Seal with the lid.
3. To serve heat up 1 cup of milk. Add 2 tablespoons of the Mexican Hot Chocolate Powder Mix. Stir.



Microwaved Hot Cocoa Mug Cake

Hot Chocolate in a mug. But wait, it's a cake!

I honestly don't cook anything in the microwave. Well, [popcorn](#), and [Caramel Corn](#). I seem to make exceptions for popcorn. I also make exceptions for cake.

Yes, that's right, I make cake in the microwave. Not all the time. Just those times when I'm serious craving it RIGHT NOW. This cake zaps that craving in the butt. I'm telling you, it's ready in like 5 minutes. How can you beat that?

I call it hot cocoa cake because it's rich and chocolatey and made in a mug. A squirt of whipped cream on top finishes the deal.

Do you want cake? Ready. Set. Go!

Hot Cocoa Mug Cake

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Yield: 2 servings

Prep Time: 1 minutes

Cook Time: 1 minutes

Total Time: 2 minutes

Ingredients:

5 Tbsp. all-purpose flour
2 and 1/2 Tbsp. unsweetened
cocoa powder
2 and 1/2 Tbsp. packed light
brown sugar
1/8 tsp. baking soda
1/8 tsp. salt
3 Tbsp. milk
2 tbsp vegetable oil
1/2 tsp. vanilla
1/3 cup whipped cream
(from a can or made from
whipping cream, I prefer
unsweetened here)

1. In a large microwave-safe coffee mug combine the dry ingredients. Add the milk, oil and vanilla and stir to combine.
2. Microwave on high power for 1 minute. Microwaves vary: If a fork stuck in comes out with soft crumbs rather than uncooked dough, you're all set (and so is the cake).
3. Top with the whipped cream and garnish with a dash of cinnamon or some chocolate shavings.



Candy Cane Hot Cocoa Mix

By Christine Pittman

Truism: The best gifts are homemade. This Candy Cane Hot Cocoa Mix proves it.

Earlier I told you about making spicy [Mexican Hot Chocolate Powder](#) as a gift to take to a friend over the holidays. That got me thinking about other easy flavored hot cocoas that you could put into jars and then place into your friend's hands.

Candy cane hot chocolate was my favorite idea in the end because I love how the bits of candy cane look through the glass of the jar. It's really easy to make too. You mix together your usual hot chocolate powder suspects (or even scoop some store-bought hot chocolate mix! I promise not to tell anyone!) and then add some broken up candy canes. Done!

When you pour hot milk or hot water over the chocolate mix, the candy melts and adds peppermint flavor to the whole chocolatey drink. I dare you to make a batch for a friend and not sneak some out for yourself. Double Doggy Dare You!!

Candy Cane Hot Cocoa Mix

Continued from previous page

Yield: 1 and 1/4 cup (about 8 servings)

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Total Time: 10 minutes

Ingredients:

1 cup hot chocolate powder
(homemade or something
like Quick)

a small jar

3 ounces of peppermint
candy (that's about 6
regular-sized candy canes)

a large heavy duty plastic
zipper bag (like ziplock)

a gift tag

a ribbon

1. Measure the hot chocolate powder into a small jar. Set aside.
2. Put the peppermint candies into a large ziplock bag. Seal the bag. Smash the candy through the bag using a rolling pin or a heavy bottomed skillet. Keep smashing until a lot of the candy is powder but there are still some bigger pieces with the identifiable red and white swirl (these are just so that the powder in the jar looks pretty. Don't worry - they will dissolve in hot liquid rapidly enough as long as there aren't too many big pieces).
3. Pour the crushed candy into the jar. Put the lid on the jar and shake it once or twice.
4. Write out your gift tag and string it onto the ribbon. Tie the ribbon around the jar.



Peppermint Hot Chocolate Float

By Christine Pittman

Because ice cream makes everything better, even hot chocolate.

Once upon a time I was making hot chocolate but didn't have any whipped cream. And no marshmallows either. What's a princess like me to do? I mean, if I'm going to consume the gown-busting calories of a mug of hot chocolate, I'm going to do it in royal style and make it count.

I searched the cupboard and searched the fridge but didn't find anything hot chocolate worthy anywhere in the kingdom. Then I opened the freezer. Behold, my prince charming was a tub of chocolate ice cream. Since then, hot chocolate floats and I have lived happily ever after.

For this recipe, you use some of the [Candy Cane Hot Chocolate Mix](#) that I shared with you on the previous page. Top with hot water or hot milk and then with a big scoop of chocolate ice cream. Don't stir. Drink immediately. The idea is that the ice cream slowly melts into the hot chocolate as you drink, making it richer with every sip.

Peppermint Hot Chocolate Float

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Yield: 1 serving

Prep Time: 2 minutes

Cook Time: 1 minutes

Total Time: 3 minutes

1. Measure the candy cane hot chocolate powder into a mug. Add the hot water. Stir until all or most of the candy cane pieces are dissolved.
2. Top with the scoop of ice cream. Don't stir. Just let it float on top and slowly melt in as you sip.

Ingredients:

2 Tbsp. candy cane hot
chocolate powder
8 ounces hot water
a big scoop of chocolate ice
cream (at least 1/3 of a cup)



Hot Chocolate Around the World

By Lyndsay Burginger

4,000 years ago, some believed Hot Chocolate brought wellness and strength. We don't know about that. But we sure know it tastes good and that's why people all over the world drink it today.

As cliché as it sounds (and you know how we love clichés here at The Cookful), Hot Chocolate really does warm you up on a cold day. Maybe it does more than that too! According to Hungry History, the Olmec tribe located in Southern Mexico would grind together cacao nibs and water to make a chocolate drink named, “xocolātl” which was believed to give the drinker magical powers and energy. If you’ve always wanted to be able to leap tall buildings in a single bound, hot chocolate might be your ticket.*

**Warning: Attempting to jump off of, or over, buildings may increase your risk of going splat on concrete. And it may cause you to spill your hot chocolate. We don't endorse any of these activities.*

Hot Chocolate Around the World

Continued from previous page

Hot Chocolate is a very popular drink around the world. In Italy and Spain, the hot chocolate is so thick you'll need a spoon to scoop it up. In Columbia they swirl in cheese. Check out these cool international hot chocolates.

SPAIN

Chocolate Caliente - Act like a proper Spaniard and grab a crisp churro to dip into your rich and thick hot chocolate.

ITALY

Cioccolato Caldo - So thick you'll need a spoon!

HUNGARY

Forró Csokoládé - Spiced with paprika, white pepper and cloves.

FRANCE

Le Chocolat Chaud - Hot Chocolate so intense you'll need a nap afterwards.

BELGIUM

Warme chocolademelk - Two words: Belgium chocolate.

COLOMBIA

Chocolate Santafereno - Swirl in a chunk of cheese for a more authentic taste.

PHILIPPINES

Tsokolate - Made with a block of chocolate then frothed.

INDIA

Chai Hot Chocolate - A hint of spices add a kick of flavor.

Taste Test: Store-Bought Hot Chocolate

By Christine Pittman

Which store-bought hot chocolate brand is the best? We tested them to find out.

We rounded up all the hot chocolate mixes at our local grocery store and did a taste test to see which one was best. They differed in a few ways.

- + chocolatiness
- + sweetness
- + creaminess/thickness
- + serving size (we weren't fans of the 3/4 cup serving sizes which barely filled any of our mugs. Maybe we should get new mugs).
- + difficulty in dissolving the powder

In all cases we followed the instructions on the packet exactly as written. If they instructions called for water but mentioned milk as a richer alternative, we used milk. If milk was not mentioned, we didn't use it.



#7 OVALTINE RICH CHOCOLATE

Method: 2 Tbsp. Ovaltine to 1 cup hot milk.

Verdict: Weak chocolate flavor, not sweet. Thin. Good serving size. Easy to dissolve. Pretty blah over all.

Taste Test: Store-Bought Hot Chocolate

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#6 NESTLE NESQUIK CHOCOLATE POWDER

Method: 1 cup milk in mug. Microwave 1 minute 30 seconds. Stir in 2 Tbsp. powder.

Verdict: Its light in color but it dissolves very easy. The milk chocolate flavor is a bit weak. A bit sweet. Not very thick. Good serving size.



#5 HERSHEY'S SPECIAL DARK SYRUP

Method: 2-3 Tbsp. Syrup to 1 cup milk. Microwave 1 minute 30 seconds.

Verdict: Grayish in color. We tried adding an extra tablespoon of syrup, it added more chocolate flavor but then it was overly-sweet. Not very thick. Easy to dissolve. Good serving size.



#4 PUBLIX ORIGINAL HOT COCOA MIX

Method: Empty 1 - 1oz package into a mug. Add 3/4 cup hot water and stir. Use milk for a creamier drink. (We used milk).

Verdict: It's a small serving size but it has rich in flavor and texture. Very sweet though. Dissolved easily.

Taste Test: Store-Bought Hot Chocolate

Continued from previous page



#3 LAND O'LAKES COCOA CLASSIC CHOCOLATE SUPREME HOT COCOA MIX

Method: Empty 1 - 1oz package into a mug. Add 3/4 cup hot water and stir.

Verdict: Small serving size. Very creamy and thick, especially considering that this one only recommends using hot water (hot milk is not mentioned on the packaging anywhere but the mix does contain dry milk powder so that explains it). Harder to dissolve than any other brands. Good chocolate flavor and not too sweet.



#2 SWISS MISS INDULGENT COLLECTION DARK CHOCOLATE SENSATION

Method: Empty 1 - 1oz package into a mug. Add 3/4 cup hot water and stir. Use milk for a creamier drink. (We used milk).

Verdict: Small serving size. Hard to dissolve. Very rich and very chocolatey. Not too sweet, just right.



#1 STARBUCKS HOT COCOA DOUBLE CHOCOLATE

Method: Empty 1 - 1oz package into a mug. Add 1 cup hot milk and stir.

Verdict: Taste's just like our homemade hot cocoa! Rich and slightly bitter, not overly sweet. Tasted homemade compared to the other brands. Slightly hard to dissolve.

And the winner is...

101 Hot Chocolate Drinks & Desserts

By Susannah Brinkley

Plain hot chocolate? Puhleeze! We've got 101 different ways to make it right here. Bet you can't try just one!

Growing up in North Carolina, it didn't snow often. Whenever it did, the entire city shut down. No school, no work. And absolutely no driving. That means only two things: Netflix by the fire and sledding on trash can lids. There's only one thing that makes those activities even better than they already are: hot chocolate.

Whenever it snowed, my mom always made my siblings and me piping hot mugs of cocoa, topped with a sprinkle of cinnamon and a few baby marshmallows. It was only when I got older that I realized the possibilities for hot chocolate were endless, making snow days even better. In case you don't believe me, we rounded up 101 ways enjoy hot chocolate this winter. Get after them.

Classic chocolate

1. [Grandma's Homemade Hot Chocolate](#)
2. [Thick Hot Chocolate](#)
3. [Heavy Cream Hot Chocolate](#)
4. [Cookies and Cream Hot Chocolate](#)
5. [Starbucks Copycat Hot Chocolate](#)

White hot

6. [Homemade Mint White Hot Chocolate](#)
7. [Homemade White Hot Chocolate](#)
8. [Matcha White Hot Chocolate](#)

9. [Pumpkin White Hot Chocolate](#)

10. [Rosemary White Hot Chocolate](#)

11. [Snickerdoodle Hot Chocolate](#)

12. [White Fudge Oreo Hot Chocolate](#)

13. [Amaretto Hot Chocolate](#)

14. [Boozy Pumpkin White Hot Chocolate](#)

Boozy boozy boozy

15. [Dark Chocolate with Cinnamon and Cognac](#)

16. [Double Chocolate Maple Hot Cocoa](#)

17. [Fireball Hot Chocolate](#)

18. [Hot Chocolate Martini](#)

19. [Kahlua Hot Chocolate](#)

20. [Pisco-Spiked Dulce De Leche Hot Chocolate](#)

21. [Rumchata Hot Cocoa](#)

22. [Salted Caramel Vodka Hot Chocolate](#)

23. [Spiked Mexican Hot Chocolate](#)

Coffee makes everything better

24. [Frozen Mexican Hot Chocolate Mocha](#)

25. [Peppermint Mocha Frozen Hot Chocolate](#)

26. [Vanilla Latte White Hot Chocolate](#)

101 Hot Chocolates

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Piece of cake

27. [Birthday Cake Hot Chocolate](#)

28. [Boozy Red Velvet Hot Chocolate](#)

29. [Cheesecake Hot Chocolate](#)

Floral and fruity

30. [Black Cherry Bourbon Hot Chocolate](#)

31. [Blackberry Bourbon Hot Chocolate](#)

32. [Coconut Tres Leches Hot Chocolate](#)

33. [Lavender Hot Chocolate](#)

34. [Orange Hot Chocolate](#)

35. [Strawberry Hot Chocolate](#)

Extra flavorful

36. [Double Caramel Hot Chocolate](#)

37. [Maple Hot Chocolate](#)

38. [Pumpkin Butterbeer Hot Chocolate](#)

39. [Sweet Potato Hot Chocolate](#)

40. [Cashew Coconut Hot Chocolate](#)

41. [Dreamy Hazelnut Hot Chocolate](#)

42. [Milk Chocolate Peanut Butter Hot Chocolate](#)

43. [Protien Nutella Hot Chocolate](#)

Sugar and spice

44. [Spiced White Hot Chocolate](#)

45. [Cardamom Hot Chocolate](#)

46. [Hot Chocolate with Cinnamon and Orange Liqueur](#)

Holiday favorites

47. [Vanilla Hot Chocolate](#)

48. [Eggnog Hot Chocolate](#)

49. [Gelt Hot Chocolate](#)

50. [Gingerbread Hot Chocolate](#)

51. [Peppermint Hot Chocolate](#)

52. [White Hot Chocolate](#)

Around the world

53. Arabic: [Arabic 7-Spice Hot Chocolate](#)

54. Aztec: [Aztec Hot Chocolate](#)

55. Chinese: [5-Spice Hot Chocolate](#)

56. Colombian: [Hot Chocolate with Cheese](#)

57. French: [Parisian Hot Chocolate](#)

58. Hawaiian: [Crockpot Coconut Hot Chocolate](#)

59. Indian: [Chai Hot Chocolate](#)

60. Irish: [Irish Cream Spiked Hot Cocoa with Chocolate Liqueur](#)

61. Italian: [Thick Spiced Italian Hot Chocolate](#)

62. Mexican: [Mexican Hot Chocolate](#)

63. Southern: [Bacon Bourbon Hazelnut Hot Chocolate](#)

64. Spanish: [Hot Chocolate with Coconut Churros](#)

101 Hot Chocolates

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Brr! Frozen

- 65. [Frozen Hot Chocolate](#)
- 66. [Hot Chocolate Affogato](#)
- 67. [Hot Cocoa Ice Cream](#)
- 68. [Peppermint Ice Cream and Hot Cocoa Affogato](#)

Marshmallow madness

- 69. [S'mores Hot Cocoa](#)
- 70. [Toasted Marshmallow Cream Hot Chocolate](#)
- 71. [Toasted Marshmallow Hot Chocolate](#)

Healthier options

- 72. [5-Minute Vegan Hot Chocolate](#)
- 73. [Dairy-Free Hot Chocolate](#)
- 74. [Dairy-Free Hot Chocolate](#)
- 75. [Paleo Hot Chocolate Mix](#)
- 76. [Paleo Mint Hot Chocolate](#)

The gift of the mixes

- 77. [Homemade Hot Chocolate Mix](#)
 - 78. [Hot Chocolate Pods](#)
 - 79. [Hot Chocolate Spoons](#)
 - 80. [Paleo Pre-Made Hot Chocolate Mix](#)
 - 81. [Peppermint Hot Chocolate Mix](#)
 - 82. [Salted Caramel Hot Chocolate Mix](#)
 - 83. [Skinny Peanut Butter Hot Cocoa Mix](#)
 - 84. [White Hot Chocolate Mix](#)
- ## **Baked goodness**
- 85. [Hot Chocolate Cake Roll](#)
 - 86. [Hot Chocolate Cheesecake Dip](#)
 - 87. [Hot Chocolate Cookies](#)
 - 88. [Hot Chocolate Marshmallow Cookies](#)
 - 89. [Hot Chocolate Thumbprint Cookies](#)

- 90. [Hot Cocoa Cookies](#)

- 91. [Hot Cocoa Squares](#)
- 92. [Mexican Hot Chocolate Cupcakes](#)
- 93. [Mexican Hot Chocolate Sandwich Cookies](#)
- 94. [Peppermint Hot Chocolate Brownies](#)
- 95. [Peppermint Hot Cocoa Challah](#)

Eye candy

- 96. [Caramel Hot Chocolate Fudge](#)
- 97. [Hot Chocolate Truffles](#)

- 98. [Hot Cocoa Fudge](#)

Snacktime

- 99. [Hot Chocolate Puppy Chow](#)
- 100. [Hot Cocoa Trail Mix](#)
- 101. [Mexican Spiced Hot Chocolate Popcorn](#)

Contributors

Many thanks to our writers for this edition of The Cookful.



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It's always entertaining when Lyndsay's in the kitchen. She's even been known to belt out Broadway show tunes while making dinner (a handy whisk as her microphone, of course). She currently writes for Cook and a Good Book, a personal blog focusing on recipes based on literature. Lyndsay is also on the editorial team at The Cookful.



Christine Pittman, editor

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Christine is the Founder and Senior Editor of The Cookful. She also blogs at COOKtheSTORY where she specializes in easy healthy homemade recipes. Healthiness aside, she has been known to shred cheese onto a dinner plate, microwave it for 30 seconds, and then eat the messy goop with a spoon.



Meghan Bassett

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Food addict turned food blogger with a love for cooking uncomplicated, gourmet recipes. I love creating food that is straightforward, relatable and will blow your friends and family away. I am the author of the food blog [Cake 'n Knife](http://Cake'nKnife.com), where you'll find that fresh ingredients + unique flavors + love = gourmet food, every single time.



Susannah Brinkley

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Susannah blogs at [Feast + West](http://Feast+West.com) where she specializes in cocktails and easy entertaining recipes. She can (and often does) eat a whole jar of olives in one sitting, sans cocktail. A graphic designer, Susannah also blogs about design for bloggers at [Garnishing Co.](http://GarnishingCo.com) And she designed this e-book.

Contributors

Continued from previous page



Maria Siriano

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Somewhere among the towers of batter-smeared mixing bowls, you'll find a flour-covered Maria making unique seasonal desserts for her blog, Sift & Whisk. Although she never quite got the hang of the clean-as-you-go technique, she has still managed to elevate her baking skills far beyond "add oil, water, and eggs." She makes a killer pie, if she does say so herself.

About The Cookful

Do you love to geek-out over food and cooking? Then The Cookful is where you need to be.

We cook and write about one topic at a time, diving in deep to help you cook (and eat!) better than ever. Each topic comes with How-To's, innovative recipes, and a bunch of interesting tidbits so that you can learn all about it. Some topics we've covered are Margaritas, Quick Soups and Popcorn. Head over to [The Cookful](#) to find out what our next topic is and then get ready to go off the deep end with us.



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