

Hot Buttered Rum

History:

Rum drinks are an essential part of our colonial history, and hot rum drinks, especially, since the colonists spent more than half of any given year staving off the cold. In the 1650s, Jamaica began steadily importing molasses to pre-America. New England opened distilleries where colonists added distilled rums to hot beverages, thus first creating toddies, nogs, buttered rums, and more. Egg nog and hot buttered rum are two winter traditions that started back in the 1600s on our soil, and we still enjoy them today. (If you're hosting your book club on or around January 17, that day is the annual National Hot Buttered Rum Day!) We're going to be using an authentic colonial recipe to make about 8 servings, but we recommend a slow cooker to do your simmering.



Ingredients:

2 c brown sugar (Do not use any sugar substitutes.)
½ c unsalted butter (Do not use any butter substitutes.)
1 pinch salt
2 qt hot water
3 cinnamon sticks
6 whole cloves
2 c rum (Dark rum is best.)
1 c sweetened whipped cream
Ground nutmeg, to taste

Directions:

Combine brown sugar, butter, salt, and hot water in 5-quart slow cooker. Add cinnamon sticks and cloves. Cover and cook on High for 30 minutes, then Low for 5 hours. Stir in well any butter that is sitting on top of the mixture. (If there are lumps of butter still visible, then your CrockPot isn't hot enough, or you need to let it simmer longer because it's not ready. Likewise, if you plan on having the drink in less than the 5 or 6 suggested hours of heating, then turn your cooker to High, OR boil the ingredients on the stove, let simmer for 15 minutes, and then move the mixture to a slow cooker on High for 2 ½ hours or so. Make sure you keep your cooker covered. Simmering is the key, so don't rush it if you don't have to.) When the crock is steaming, and the butter is glistening, then your drink is ready. Stir in rum. Ladle from the slow cooker into mugs, and top each mug with whipped cream and a dusting of nutmeg. Before you ladle, every time, make sure you've stirred up the butter that may float on the top of the mixture, so it isn't floating on the top of the mug. If you are sensitive to the rich buttery taste, you can scale back on the butter, or let it simmer longer. If you'd prefer to control your amount of rum, or you have some readers who are more or less sensitive to it, you can leave the rum out of the slow cooker, and just add it to the bottom of each mug individually before adding the batter on top, then give it a quick stir before you add whipped cream. Dabs of nutmeg, allspice, and vanilla can be added to the mixture for more flavor, to taste.

Adapted from an authentic colonial recipe by Linda Corrier at All Recipes, and modified by Leah Angstman.