

The image shows four glasses of a red, frothy beverage, likely a hot cider or spiced punch, arranged in a row. Each glass is topped with a thick layer of white foam. A skewer of five bright red cherries is placed in each glass, with the skewer extending above the rim. The background is dark with out-of-focus, warm-toned bokeh lights, suggesting a festive or indoor setting. The overall composition is centered and visually appealing.

HOT DRINKS

Cider, Coffee, Tea, Hot Chocolate, Spiced Punch, Spirits

MARY LOU HEISS and ROBERT J. HEISS



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PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARSHALL GORDON



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introduction

When the long days of summer turn cool and crisp, we stow away outdoor grills and retreat to the warmth of the kitchen. After we replenish the pantry and sift through our favorite cold-weather recipes, comforting oven-baked dishes make a reappearance on the dinner table. And as fall colors fade into winter, each month brings new opportunities to gather family and friends together in celebration of the coming holiday season.

As our menus change with the season, our preferences in beverages also shift, from icy warm-weather refreshers to enticing cold-weather warmers. *Hot drinks*—the very words conjure sensations of coziness, comfort, and a kaleidoscope of sweet, spicy, and creamy goodness. With a wealth of flavors and a wide variety of inviting tastes, the palette of hot drinks offers something for everyone: smooth chocolates, tantalizing coffees, cosmopolitan teas and tisanes, fruited punches, bedtime soothers, and stylish cocktails.

Whether familiar or exotic, sweet or savory, hot drinks have a magical aura. Regardless of whether they include alcohol, hot drinks express hospitality and conviviality on any occasion: a casual luncheon, a formal soiree, a board game in front of a crackling fire, or a family gathering to celebrate a special moment. It seems like only seconds until the toasty glow from a hot beverage warms us from head to toe.

So dust off your punch bowl, set out your finest cups and saucers, or wrap your chilly hands around your favorite oversized mug. Treat yourself—and your loved ones or guests—to the pleasures of the easy-to-prepare and dressed-up drinks in this book. In these pages, you'll find the perfect beverage for every phase of autumn and winter.

Hot glasses of [Moroccan Mint Tea](#), made with fistfuls of fresh mint plucked from the late-season garden, allow us to connect with the fading warmth of summer for one last moment.

After an afternoon of cheering on the hometown football team, treat the gang to steaming mugs of [Mayan Hot Chocolate with Chile and Orange](#) or the appropriately named [Bonfire](#).

When the family gathers around the table for a pumpkin carving contest, serve a platter of homemade cookies accompanied by tall glasses of [Hot Milk Chocolate and Vanilla Ice Cream Soda](#) or [Spicy Mulled Cider](#).

Whether you're the veteran host of the annual Thanksgiving gathering or a newlywed hosting the family gathering for the first time, surprise your guests with a pitcher of [Hot Wasabi Red Snappers](#) or start a new tradition by serving an appetite-whetting round of [Admiral's Rum and Brandy Punch](#) or [West Indies Pineapple Cups](#). And for the perfect postprandial treat to celebrate a fabulous meal, present an elegant tray of demitasse cups filled with rich [Café Viennoise](#) or [Café Brûlot](#).

When the north wind scatters the last leaves of autumn, bare-branched silhouettes remind us that the blustery days of winter—and the festive holiday season—are approaching. This yuletide, chase away the bah-humbug blues by rounding up friends and family to celebrate in gatherings large or small. A glittery punch bowl filled with ruby red [Cranberry Claret Cup](#) or a traditional [Wassail](#) brings holiday cheer and classy sophistication to wintry social events. And what cold-weather activity is complete without a spirited recap over rich cups of [Hot Speculatus](#) around the kitchen table?

De-stress after a flurry-filled day of holiday shopping and gift wrapping with a soothing mug of [Snowflake Vanilla White Chocolate](#) or snuggle up with a loved one and share a seductive [Angel's Kiss](#).

A unique or unexpected drink can turn any occasion into a festive one, so savvy hosts serve signature drinks when they want to turn things up a notch. Increase the wow factor at your next winter party by offering sleek glasses of [Fire and Ice](#) or toasting cups of [Mistletoe and Holly](#).

Whether you're partial to the [Monk's Robe](#), a grown-up variation of a childhood favorite, or the piquant and peppery [Masala Chai](#), you're sure to find more than a few new favorites in this book. Any of these recipes can be adjusted to suit your taste. Use them as templates for experimentation to create your own repertoire of hot drinks.

And when you ring in the New Year with [Pan-Asian Pear William](#) cocktails, you might just end up being the toast of the town. Cheers!



pantry essentials

If you keep a few key pantry ingredients on hand, you'll be ready to whip up a batch of tasty hot drinks whenever the occasion arises. Nearly all of the ingredients in these recipes are readily available, and acceptable substitutions are suggested for more unusual items. Some liquors can be purchased in small amounts, which means you can amass a collection of new tastes without spending a fortune.

absolut citron and absolut peppar

The Swedish company Absolut is known for its flavored vodkas that incorporate all-natural ingredients ranging from chile peppers to vanilla to citrus and other fruits. Absolute Citron is flavored with lemon and lime, and Absolut Peppar is flavored with red and green chile peppers and a suspected dash of ground chile.

apple cider

Depending on where you live, you may be able to purchase sweet apple cider year-round. Look for cloudy, fresh-pressed cider made by an orchard or cider maker in your area. Avoid using crystal clear apple juice, which lacks the full flavor and body of freshly pressed cider.

aquavit

Also known as *akvavit*, this crystal-clear spirit is the national drink of several Scandinavian countries. *Aquavit*, which means "water of life," is intended to be drunk ice-cold and plain with food. Although it closely resembles vodka, it has a refreshing light caraway flavor that makes it a good choice for adding subtle flavor when crafting cocktails.

blood orange bitters

All varieties of bitters are used as an accent flavoring and to give desirable astringency and pull (a term used to describe dryness) to well-made cocktails and mixed drinks. Bitters can be used to stimulate appetites before a meal or to help with overindulgence afterward. Most formulas are a proprietary blend of ingredients and may include herbs, berries, fruits, roots, and flowers. Some bitters contain alcohol, others do not. If you can't find blood orange bitters, orange bitters can be used in its place.

cardamom

Cardamom, a member of the ginger family, is native to India and Sri Lanka. Its seedpods, used for culinary purposes, are available in white and green varieties. White cardamom is green cardamom that has been bleached with sulfur dioxide to sweeten the flavor and round out the aroma. White cardamom is commonly used in Scandinavian and German baked goods. Green cardamom is used throughout India, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka to flavor meat and vegetable curries and in aromatic spice blends. For the best flavor, crack each pod open with your fingertips or a mortar and pestle. While the pods add visual interest, it is the aromatic black seeds within the pods that contain the flavor.

ceylon cinnamon sticks

Ceylon cinnamon is one of the two species of cinnamon cultivated in Sri Lanka and Indonesia. Ceylon cinnamon sticks, found in specialty food stores, are easily recognized due to their distinctive appearance. Look for brittle, flaky light brown quills that are tightly wound like a rolled paper document and have a fine, sweet aroma. Feel free to substitute hard cinnamon sticks (which are really cassia, the fragrant bark of an evergreen tree related to but different from true cinnamon) if you cannot find soft Ceylon cinnamon sticks.

chambord

This wildly popular cognac-based French liqueur, which has been made in the Loire Valley since the late 1600s, is generously flavored with raspberries and blackberries and tempered with Madagascar vanilla, citrus peel, and honey. It's easy to recognize in its distinctive bottle resembling a crown.

chiles

Volumes can (and have) been written about the immense variety of chile peppers and their wide range of flavors and hotness ratings. For an unusual twist on hot chocolate, experiment with adding a bit of ground ancho, Chimayo, or pasilla chiles; these varieties rank about 5 on a hotness scale of 1 to 10. They impart wonderful chile flavor, as well as moderate heat, and are nicely complemented by sweet spices such as cinnamon, ginger, clove, and nutmeg.

citrus twists

To make citrus twists, use a handheld citrus zester, commonly known as a channel knife, to peel long strips of zest from oranges, lemons, limes, and other citrus fruits. A twist adds a wonderfully intense hit of fresh citrus flavor to cocktails, punch, hot tea, and espresso. The zest contains concentrated citrus oils and its flavor is quite different from the citrus flesh. Don't chisel too deeply into the rind; the white pith beneath the rind is bitter.

cocoa powder

A natural product of chocolate manufacture, dry cocoa powder is obtained

when natural cacao butter is removed from cacao nibs. Dutch process cocoa is treated with an alkali to reduce the natural bitterness of the cocoa and give it a richer, darker flavor. Look for the following brands: Bendsdorp, Droste, Van Houten, Michel Cluizel, Slitti, and Valrhona.

coffee

When making specialty coffee drinks, use the freshest coffee beans possible and brew the coffee strong. It's best to use Viennese or French roast, or another dark roast, and brew the coffee in a French press or an espresso pot. Both of these methods will allow some soluble solids to remain in the brew, so that the coffee has a desirable level of cloudiness.

cream

While cream hardly needs a definition, the various types of cream available can be confusing. Light cream must contain between 18 and 30 percent milk fat, whipping cream must contain between 30 and 36 percent milk fat, and heavy cream must contain at least 36 percent milk fat. Only whipping cream and heavy cream have a high enough fat content to maintain stable peaks when whipped. The firmness of whipped cream is determined by the length of time it's whipped. Some drinks require a dollop of firmly whipped heavy cream as it holds its shape best. Other drinks require lightly whipped cream, which gives a loose texture that must be spooned over the top of the drink.

drambuie

This Scottish liqueur, based on a blend of aged Scotch whiskies and sweetened with honey, is made from a secret recipe that has been closely guarded by the MacKinnon family for more than 250 years. Reported to be the personal drink of rebel Prince Charles Edward Stuart, Drambuie is rumored to contain saffron and nutmeg among its ingredients. The name *Drambuie* is based on the Gaelic phrase "An Dram Buidheach," which means "the drink that satisfies."

dulce de leche

Dulce de leche is a caramel-like milk-based spread that is popular throughout Latin America. Because of its creamy texture, it can be lavished on muffins or bread right from the jar, heated and used as an ice cream topping, or spooned into hot drinks to add rich, slightly caramelized sweetness.

fleur de sel

The name of this artisanal French sea salt means the "flower of salt." Strictly top-shelf, it's made from pure seawater off the coast of Brittany in northwest France. Although *fleur de sel* is expensive, it provides a wonderful counterbalance to the sweetness of caramel, chocolate, or cream, and usually only a small amount is needed.

frangelico

This fragrant, luxurious Italian liqueur is made from roasted wild hazelnuts from the Piedmont region of northern Italy, in the foothills of the Alps. Reportedly first made 300 years ago by its namesake Fra Angelico, a hermit, this liqueur is made from a traditional recipe that features cocoa, vanilla, and forest berries among its roster of natural ingredients.

hpnotiq

This ultrachic sky blue French liqueur is made from a blend of premium vodka, natural tropical fruit juices, and a touch of cognac. In addition to bringing a warm touch of the Caribbean to any party, it infuses cocktails with an intoxicating blue color.

junmai ginjo sake

The national drink of Japan, sake is made from special varieties of short-grain rice that are polished to varying degrees and fermented with pure water. While a dizzying array of sakes are available in specialty wine shops, look for a fruity and fragrant sake in the *junmai ginjo* style for use in hot drinks.

limoncello

A product of Naples and the island of Capri, this famous Italian aperitif is made from clear, flavorless spirits, water, sugar, and the outermost peel of locally grown Sorrento lemons. Limoncello is usually served straight up in small glasses from a bottle kept on ice in the freezer.

madeira

One of the great fortified wines of the world, Madeira hails from its namesake island, located off the southern coast of Portugal. Like port, it gains substance and heft from fortification, the addition of brandy to the wine either before or after fermentation. In part due to their full, robust flavors, fortified wines have been used for centuries in libations such as punch and wassail.

matcha

Matcha is the powdered green tea used in the Japanese tea ceremony. Because of its dark emerald color, it's also used to lend a vivid hue to beverages and baked goods made with green tea. *Matcha's* dry and somewhat astringent flavor combines deliciously with sweet flavors.

midori

This proprietary melon liqueur was created by Suntory in Japan in the 1980s. Midori has a stunning emerald color and a heady aroma of perfectly ripe honeydew melon.

mint

You can most likely find fresh mint year-round at the grocer's or your local Asian market. The wrinkly leafed variety is a wonderful herb to experiment with during the dark months of winter. The exuberant aroma and flavor of fresh mint brings a welcome bit of summer freshness into the winter kitchen. It can be added to either black or green tea and is used to make minted hot chocolate as well.

sherry pepper sauce

A product of Bermuda and Jamaica, this versatile sauce is made from a mixture of spices and hot chiles that have been mascerated in sherry. Thin and clear, it adds bone-dry, crisp heat to drinks and other recipes. Do not substitute hot sauces made with tomatoes or fruit.

star anise

One of the most aromatic of the sweet spices, star anise is most widely cultivated in China, India, and Vietnam. The star-shaped pods flaunt eight perfect points, each of which contains a shiny little seed. In commerce, star anise pods are often broken, but don't worry—just use eight individual points to make one whole star anise.

sugar

The best sugars are made from sugarcane and are unrefined. The process of extracting and then evaporating the juice from sugarcane results in flavorful sugars with varying amounts of natural molasses still present. The more molasses, the darker and stickier the sugar will be. Highly refined white sugar, which has virtually no flavor, just sweetness, has had all of the natural cane molasses removed. In recipes that call for sugar and don't specify type, we recommend granulated sugar.

Demerara sugar is a large-grained, semidry raw sugar with enough molasses content to add a tint of color and a slightly caramelized brown sugar flavor. Turbinado sugar or evaporated cane juice (both raw sugar, as well) or light brown sugar can be used as a substitute, but do not substitute muscovado or dark brown sugar.

European-style sugar cubes are available in white or brown sugar. These irregularly shaped, somewhat lumpy sugar cubes have a rough texture and a grainy surface. They are different from standard sugar cubes, which have a smooth finish and have been cut into even cubes.

Superfine sugar, also known as bar sugar, is often preferable for use in beverages because, as the name implies, it's very finely granulated, allowing it to dissolve almost instantly in cold liquids. When dissolving sugar into hot liquids, it isn't as important to use superfine sugar.

sugar syrups

Flavored sugar syrups in a rainbow of colors and flavors are used in cafés to add a combination of flavors to coffee and tea drinks. You can do the same at home with a well-chosen selection of flavors that you like. Look for brands, such as Monin, that use natural ingredients.

sweet lemonade

Making lemonade from scratch is ideal, but frozen lemonade concentrate is the next best thing. To give frozen concentrate a fresher flavor, add some freshly squeezed lemon juice and use less water than is called for.

tea

True tea contains caffeine and is made from the leaves of the *Camellia sinensis* bush and manufactured into six major classes—green, yellow, white, oolong, black, and pu-erh. These teas yield different tasting brews. Most spiced tea recipes call for strong black tea; look for loose-leaf tea or tea bags from Kenya or the Assam region of India. When choosing a green tea, be aware that Chinese and Japanese green teas have different flavor profiles. When Chinese green tea is called for, purchase tea from a specialty tea shop or look for Stash Premium Green Tea teabags available nationwide. For recipes using Japanese green tea, use Stash Sushi Bar Mild Green Tea teabags or Peet's Sencha teabags.





chapter 1

chocolates and coffees





Paris After Dark

paris after dark

Undecided about whether to serve coffee or hot chocolate? This gloriously rich drink doesn't force you to choose. Inspired by savvy Parisians, who enjoy their after-dinner coffee with small pieces of dark chocolate, this sophisticated, continental-style brew combines both beloved flavors. The topping of whipped cream sprinkled with a pinch of *fleur de sel* (French sea salt) adds a contemporary twist.

Serves 2

2 teaspoons sugar

2 teaspoons Dutch process cocoa powder

2 teaspoons heavy cream

½ cups strong, freshly brewed coffee

1 cup heavy cream, firmly whipped with 1 teaspoon sugar, for garnish

A pinch of fleur de sel for garnish

- In each of two mugs, mix 2 teaspoons of the sugar and 2 teaspoons of the cocoa until well-blended and lump free. Add 2 teaspoons of the cream to each and stir until thoroughly combined into a light paste. Add ¾ cup of the coffee to each and stir again until thoroughly mixed.
- Top each with a dollop of whipped cream. Roll the dollop over to stain it with the coffee, then sprinkle a few grains of fleur de sel atop the whipped cream.





Mayan Hot Chocolate with Chile and Orange