

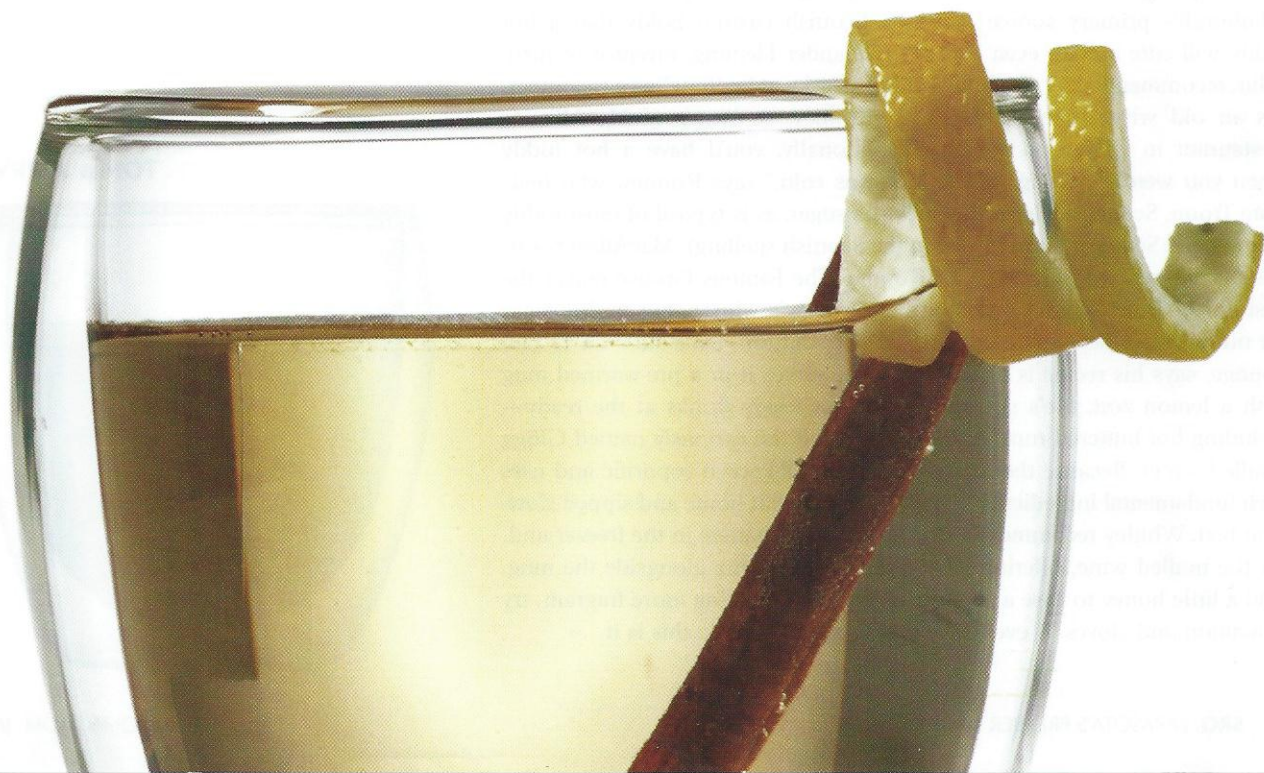
SMOKIN' HOT TODDY

STEAMING MUGS FOR JANUARY. BY AMY NANCE PHOTOS BY SALVATORE BRANCIFORT

*"I don't quite recollect how many tumblers of whiskey toddy each man drank after supper; but this I know, that about one o'clock in the morning, the baillie's grown-up son became insensible while attempting the first verse of 'Willie brewed a peck o' maut'; and he having been, for half an hour before, the only other man visible above the mahogany, it occurred to my uncle that it was almost time to think about going . . ." Charles Dickens, *The Pickwick Papers**



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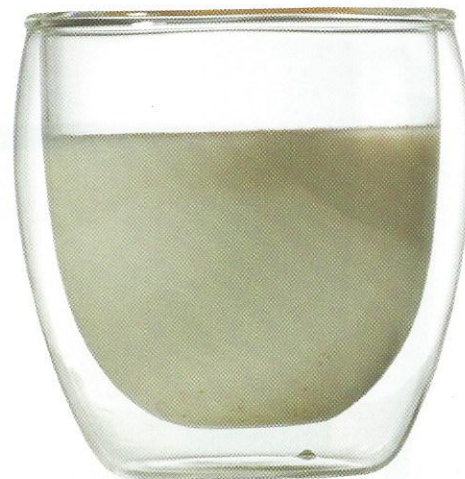


HOT BUTTERED RUM

So we're not in the middle of a bracing Dickensian winter, and this isn't 19th century London. But the toddy is as germane to the season as egg nog or hot chocolate, regardless of where in the world you happen to be drinking it.

Comprised of hot water and a spirit base—usually whiskey or brandy, but friskier versions call for rum and even tequila—the toddy's origins are hotly contested. Though it's claimed by England and Ireland, the toddy most likely emerged from Scotland. Many point to a verse by 18th century Edinburgh poet Allan Ramsay, which ends, "Only some kettles full of Todian spring." In this case, the "Todian spring" is actually Tod's Well, once Edinburgh's primary source of water. Scottish custom holds that a hot toddy will cure a cold; even Scot Sir Alexander Fleming, inventor of penicillin, recommended "A good gulp of hot whisky at bedtime" as a treatment. It's an old wives' tale, scoffs Karen Ronney, co-owner of MacAllisters Restaurant in Lakewood Ranch. "Traditionally, you'd have a hot toddy when you weren't feeling well or if it was cold," says Ronney, who hails from Troon, Scotland. Her toddy includes sugar, as is typical of most toddy recipes, and Scotch whisky (no "e" in the Scottish spelling). MacAllisters carries 60 different whiskies, but for Ronney, The Famous Grouse makes the best toddy. Peter Whitley's version has Ronney's whisky, but trades sugar for nutmeg. Whitley, mixologist at The Ritz-Carlton, Sarasota's Ca D'Zan Lounge, says his recipe is a classic, and he serves it in a pre-warmed mug with a lemon zest. He's got a stable of hot toddy drinks at the ready—including hot buttered rum, Tom and Jerry and the curiously named Glögg (mulled wine). Because the toddy is such a well-known soporific and uses such fundamental ingredients, it begs to be made at home and sipped slowly in bed. Whitley recommends storing pre-made batters in the freezer and, for the mulled wine, offering some fruit from the mix alongside the mug. Add a little honey to ease a sore throat or, for something more fragrant, try cinnamon and cloves. If ever there was a comfort drink, this is it. >>

TOM & JERRY



BRING ON THE GLÖGG

The Scots say: "Retire to bed, put hat on bottom of bed, drink hot toddy until you see two hats." Here, Peter Whitley, mixologist at The Ritz-Carlton, Sarasota's Ca D'Zan Lounge, shares his favorite Glögg recipe.

- 1 bottle of red wine (merlot is preferred)
- 4 oz. brandy
- 1 oz. Triple Sec or Cointreau
- 3 cups of hot water
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 dozen cloves
- 2-3 cinnamon sticks
- 1 lemon sliced into very thin rings
- 1/2 orange sliced into very thin rings
- 1/4 cup raisins
- 1/4 cup dried cranberries

Combine sugar, water, cloves, lemon, orange, raisins and cranberries and simmer for 15-20 minutes. Add wine and simmer for 5 minutes. Add brandy and Cointreau. Serve warm in a coffee mug. Makes 4-6 cups.

GLÖGG

