

Nathan's eggnog

I admit to having said some not very nice things about eggnog in the past. But that was before I tried Nathan's eggnog. Heavy on the bourbon, light on the sugar and spice, and silky smooth on the tongue, this one is a creamy and delicious dessert in a glass. Also, Nathan cooks (and bakes) at Chez Panisse, so we can trust him. Having said that, eggnog would more traditionally be made with rum, brandy or whisky, but Nathan's from Kentucky.



Serves: 8

Preparation time: Nathan did it in about 5 minutes (you might want to allow a little longer)

475ml (2 cups) full-fat milk

170g ($\frac{3}{4}$ cup) sugar, divided into 115g ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup) and 55g ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup)

a vanilla bean, or a small dash of vanilla essence

4 eggs, separated

pinch of salt

235ml (1 cup) bourbon

4 tbsps rum

235ml (1 cup) double (heavy) cream

grated nutmeg

1. Put milk in a small saucepan with 115g ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup) sugar, vanilla bean (split along its length to expose its seeds) and salt and heat gently until nearly simmering (but not).
2. Meanwhile whisk yolks in a bowl until pale and creamy. When milk has heated pour it over the yolks, slowly and only a little at first so as not to scramble them, whilst whisking continuously.
3. Return mixture to the pan and cook over a low heat, stirring slowly and continuously with a rubber spatula, until mixture thickens. Be careful – if you cook it too much it will curdle.
4. Pour custard through a sieve into a clean bowl and stir in bourbon and rum. Refrigerate until well-chilled.
5. When time to serve, whip cream until soft peaks form. In a separate bowl whisk egg whites with the remaining sugar until soft peaks form. Fold cream and then whites into the chilled custard. Pour into glasses and garnish with grated nutmeg.

Eggnog facts:

- Eggnog probably originated in Europe, from where it was taken to America, and popularised to the extent that everything here is eggnog flavoured come December.
- The word may come from 'noggin', a Middle English word for a small wooden cup, from which eggy alcoholic beverages called 'egg-flips' were consumed in East Anglia and beyond. These were originally made with eggs, wine or ale, and milk, and later included spirits such as brandy.
- When colonists took the idea to the New World, rum, being more affordable and available, became the spike of choice. In colonial America rum was known as 'grog', so the drink became an 'egg-and-grog', which became abbreviated to 'egg-n-grog', and finally, 'egg-nog'. (Which ruins the little noggin story above, which seems a shame...)
- There are similar drinks and drink-like-desserts all over the world – for example Venezuelan *ponche crema*, Dutch *advocaat*, Mexican *rompope*, Puerto Rican *coquito*, German *eierpunsch*, Italian *zabaglione*, French *sabayon* and Polish *kogel mogel*.
- Unbelievably, you can now buy not only non-alcoholic 'eggnog' here in the USA, but also 'eggless eggnog', 'low-carb eggnog', 'low-fat eggnog' and 'vegan eggnog'. Of course, there is also a hideous array of added flavours too – banana, coconut, cinnamon, chocolate, coffee, gingerbread, pumpkin... to name but a few. I'm really not sure at what point something with no egg and no nog ceases to be an eggnog.

Sources:

www.wikipedia.org

various dodgy eggnog websites



Anna Colquhoun, December 2007