



Merry Christmas!



The History of Hot Chocolate

It Started in Mexico

As early as 500 BC, the Mayans were drinking chocolate made from ground-up cocoa seeds mixed with water, cornmeal, and chili peppers (as well as other ingredients)—a much different version

from the hot chocolate we know today. They would mix the drink by pouring it back and forth from a cup to a pot until a thick foam developed, and then enjoy the beverage cold. Although the chocolate drink was available to all classes of people, the wealthy would drink it from large vessels with spouts, which later would be buried along with them.

Then Made its Way to Europe

In the early 1500s, the explorer Cortez brought cocoa beans and the chocolate drink-making tools to Europe. Although the drink still remained cold and bitter-tasting, it gained popularity and was adopted by the court of King Charles V as well as the Spanish upper class. After its introduction in Spain, the drink began to be served hot, sweetened, and without the chili peppers. The Spanish were very protective of their wonderful new beverage, and it was over a hundred years before news of it began to spread across Europe.

When it hit London in the 1700s, chocolate houses (similar to today's coffee shops) became popular and very trendy, even though chocolate was very expensive. In the late 1700s, the president of the Royal College of Physicians, Hans Sloane, brought from Jamaica a recipe for mixing chocolate with milk, which made the drink more palatable in his opinion. Well, others agreed and the English started adding milk to their chocolate; it was then enjoyed as an after-dinner beverage.

Hot Chocolate Today

Up until the 19th century, hot chocolate was used as a treatment for stomach and liver diseases as well as a special drink. Today, however, we simply treat this warm concoction as a beverage to sip and savor. In America, hot chocolate is somewhat thin and often made by combining hot water with packets of powder, although you can find more authentic and gourmet varieties in restaurants and cafes. Other countries have their own versions—Spain's thick chocolate a la taza, spiced chocolate para mesa from Latin America, and Italy's cioccolata calda, which is very thick.

Hot chocolate has become so popular in the United States that it is available in coffee vending machines. The powder is sold in packets and canisters, and coffee houses often have rich, somewhat thicker varieties on their menus.

The Evolution of Chocolate

It wasn't until the middle of the 18th century that chocolate began to evolve past its drinkable form. First, cocoa powder was invented in Holland, where the Dutch controlled nearly the entire cocoa bean trade. Since the cocoa powder blends much easier with milk or water, it allowed for more creations to come. Next came chocolate as a candy by mixing cocoa butter with sugar and in 1876, milk chocolate was developed. From then on, chocolate has become more popular as a solid treat rather than as the drink it started from.

~Resource: <https://www.thespruceeats.com/the-history-of-hot-chocolate-764463>

December Food Holidays

December 1: National Fried Pie Day
December 2: National Fritters Day
December 3: National Peppermint Latte Day
December 4: National Cookie Day
December 5: National Comfort Food Day
December 6: National Gazpacho Day
December 7: National Cotton Candy Day
December 8: National Brownie Day
December 9: National Pastry Day
December 10: National Lager Day
December 11: National "Have a Bagel" Day
December 12: National Cocoa Day
December 13: National Popcorn String Day
December 14: National Biscuits & Gravy Day
December 15: National Gingerbread Latte Day
December 16: National Chocolate Covered Anything Day
December 17: National Maple Syrup Day
December 18: National "I Love Honey" Day
December 19: National Hard Candy Day
December 20: National Sangria Day
December 21: National French Fried Shrimp Day
December 22: National Date Nut Bread Day
December 23: National Bake Day
December 24: National Egg Nog Day
December 25: National Pumpkin Pie Day
December 26: National Candy Cane Day
December 27: National Fruitcake Day
December 28: National Box of Chocolates Day
December 29: National "Get on the Scales" Day
December 30: National Bacon Day
December 31: National Champagne Day



~Resource: <https://foodimentary.com/today-in-national-food-holidays/>

**Hot Cranberry
Apple Spiced**



Cider

Ingredients

4 quarts Spiced Apple Cider 128 ounces
2 quarts Cranberry Juice 64 ounces
3 whole cloves
2 cinnamon sticks
2 oranges sliced
1 cup fresh or frozen cranberries

Instructions

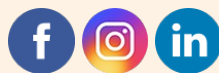
Combine all ingredients in a large stock pot or Dutch oven. Bring to a rolling boil for 5 minutes. Reduce heat to simmer and allow to simmer, covered, for 30-45 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Remove the cloves and cinnamon sticks. Transfer to a slow cooker to keep warm

for a party, or serve directly from the stovetop, warm. Garnish with an orange slice and cinnamon stick to serve. Enjoy!

~Resource: www.thecookierookie.com

**Merry Christmas,
Eji's Culinary**



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