

FORMULA FOR HOT BUTTERED RUM

This time of year is always one for toasts and holiday libations. We hear of such things as “here’s mud in your eye”, “to absent comrades” etc. Most of these have some sort of military connotation(s) and are usually given while gathered around the punch bowl.

“Here’s Mud in Your Eye” had to do with the abysmal conditions in the trenches in WWI, and the fact that the average Doughboy never could seem to get clean. The trenches were eternally muddy and the lack of bathing facilities made it even worse. When a man finally caught “the one with his name on it”, the mud in your eye alluded to the fact that you were going to get patted in the face with a spade. Since the ground seemed to be a sea of mud, when you were buried it would be most likely that you would get “mud in your eye” – hence the gruesome toast. “To absent comrades” is self explanatory... There are many others of course, but these a simply a couple that come to mind.

Since the upcoming season(s) will soon be upon us, I thought it only fitting to slip in my favorite libation for such toasts to be used for such events as Halloween (to be here shortly), Armistice Day (I’m a traditionalist), The Marine Corps Birthday, Thanksgiving and Christmas...

I had always heard about Hot Buttered Rum and thought it sounded like the perfect cold weather drink. Well, I finally ordered one and much to my surprise and dismay, it was made with mostly hot water, sugar, rum and enough butter to coat the backside of your teeth! Yeech... My curiosity having been satisfied, I never ordered another. However...

Being a voracious reader, I was re-reading Kenneth Roberts’ “Northwest Passage”... I stopped dead in mid-paragraph, and marveled that I had seemingly rediscovered the original colonial recipe for the legendary drink! No hot water, no sugar, just natural cider and rum with a bit of butter. Hummm... In the book, they were making the brew in a kettle outdoors and heating the concoction by stirring the pot with a hot poker heated in the fire.

I decided to experiment, and here’s what I came up with... All you need are the following:

- 1) Five Quart Crock-Pot (or equivalent).
- 2) One Quart (or one Fifth) of Dark Rum. (depends on your guests and the occasion!).
- 3) One gallon of sweet cider (fresh squeezed and natural is best if you’re gonna’ make it right away, but pasteurized cider from the grocery store will do). I’ve tried making it with hard cider, but it tends to be too bitter for my taste!
- 4) One squeeze bottle of Parkay (or any tub of butter or margarine). I’m lazy and spent many years as a bachelor – Squeeze Parkay was known as “bachelor-butter”.
- 5) One small (shaker) can of Nutmeg and one of Cinnamon.

Pour the hooch (rum) in the crock pot first, followed by the Apple Cider. Fill the crock-pot to about 1” from the top. Sprinkle the top of the liquid ingredients with nutmeg and cinnamon to taste and stir them well into the brew. Set the pot on low and allow to simmer until it’s ready to serve. Allow about 3 – 4 hours (or more) to reach drinking temperature. It doesn’t seem to

hurt it if you leave it plugged in all day, but remember to keep the top on the pot or the more volatile rum will evaporate. If you are going to be gone for a while, I advise putting a large piece of aluminum foil across the pot and putting the glass top on over the foil. This takes care of most evaporation.

When you are ready to serve, put a good healthy squeeze of the Parkay, margarine or butter (several tablespoons – don't overdo it as much as in the modern commercial drink, it'll coat the back of your teeth!). Too little butter is better than too much. If you want more, you can either add it to the individual cup or to the pot...

Enjoy...

A couple of suggestions:

A pot of this stuff is great to have waiting for you and your guests when you come in from a day on the slopes or from a snowmobile outing... **DO NOT IMBIBE THIS STUFF PRIOR TO DOING ANYTHING THAT REQUIRES HAND-EYE COORDINATION!**

While my youngster was still in the "Trick or Treating" mode, I used to make up a pot for Halloween. I would dress "all hands" in some sort of costume (even Annie Beagle had a small sheet with a hole for her tail), and put two TV trays outside the door (I was living in quarters on a Navy Base, so all trick or treating was done on foot and accompanied by appropriate parents).

I would run an extension cord for the Crock-Pot out to one and festoon the tray with "to go" Styrofoam cups... The other tray was laden with the usual and approved "wrapped" Halloween candy, etc. The parents would come by with their kids, and I would ladle them out a cup of Hot Buttered Rum... Everyone would leave happy, but I noticed that I was getting a lot of return business (hee, hee, hee...). By the time the evening was over I had gathered quite a crowd. It was lotsa' fun and it became a sort of Halloween Tradition.

When I was stationed in the Boston Area with the Air Force, I'd usually take the rugrat to the Salem Witch Museum and have my traditional pot of Hot Buttered Rum for the evening festivities (again we were on base and it was a "no-drive" situation)...

The Hot Buttered Rum pot is also appropriate for a family gathering during the holiday seasons and can be "built" early in the morning and forgotten about until after dinner... We used to make one for the Marine Corps Birthday Ball and Mess Nights too... A very versatile concoction...

At any rate, a most Happy Halloween, Marine Corps Birthday and Armistice Day, and "Here's Mud in Your Eye"...

Semper Fi,

Dick