



The Hot Toddy

According to Maritimer and 2014 Springsong Guest Author Linden MacIntyre, two alcoholic beverages stand apart from speculations about whether booze is good or bad for human health. “Dark, bitter beer, generally known as ‘stout,’ replenishes iron and is therefore good for us. And the hot toddy enhances endurance in a damp, cold environment; in the early stages of an illness it induces sweats that discharge toxins from winter-weakened bodies. Even children, in some cultures, are known to benefit from drinking stout and toddies.

“To drink a glass of stout requires only simple choice—to imbibe or not,” he writes. “The toddy requires more conscious effort.” He offers the following options in both inputs and preparation.

Basic-Back-Home (BBH) Toddy

INGREDIENTS

Black rum, the most important ingredient and preferably an unpretentious label (Captain Morgan, Lamb’s Palm Breeze, and Old Sam are more than adequate, robust, generally available, and cheap)

Boiling water

Sugar

A metal spoon

METHOD

My late mother (who almost made it to the age of 101) would insist the water must be at a ‘rolling boil’ when introduced to either teapot or toddy mug.

As the water is brought to a rolling boil, a single teaspoon of sugar, preferably white, is deposited in the appropriate receptacle. It is important to leave the spoon in the container, especially if the container is made of glass. Before the advent of modern heating, many toddies were prepared in chilly rooms and so the spoon, according to tradition, mitigates the impact on the container of a liquid that is boiling violently, as it should be for a toddy.

As the water is poured, the sugar will dissolve from gentle stirring with the spoon.

Only now is the rum introduced, preferably poured by hand straight from the bottle until the desired dark colour of the toddy has been achieved.

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We-Have-Gone-Away-And-Become-Successful Toddy

INGREDIENTS

Rum, from a better section of the liquor store (Mount Gay, Plantation, London Dock add to the gravitas of any Gone-Away occasion)

Water, as per BBH toddy

Honey (Sugar tends to lower the tone of both toddy and occasion and should be substituted by a higher quality sweetener)

Condiments (Lemon, cloves and butter)

METHOD

The WHGAABS Toddy is usually reserved for ceremonial or sentimental moments such as Christmas or New Year's among BBH friends. Or perhaps after a winter funeral. The success of migration from home both enables and demands improvement in one's presentation both of self and toddy.

The preparation sequence is the same as for the BBH. Sweetener and spoon; furiously boiling water; and rum, in this case, poured from a shot glass for the sake of appearances. Then stir.

Now, something different: condiments. Lemon, cloves and butter will raise the toddy experience to a realm that is comparable, socially, to mulled wine or a heated, spicy port.

The Third Option

INGREDIENTS

Rum, as desired and available but definitely dark

Container, preferably an unbreakable mug

Sweetener: unnecessary

Violently boiling water: never

METHOD

Designed for difficult marine conditions.

Holding mug in a passive hand and bottle in an active hand, pour the rum carefully and in quantity as taste and circumstances deem appropriate.

Enjoy.

