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Day 15



Little Patty's Hot Cocoa Anytime

This time of year, especially while decorating our Christmas Tree, everyone needs a memorable cup of Hot Cocoa. At least I know I do and my boys (Brandon & Greg 😊) do, too.

Hot Cocoa for most Americans comes in a little pouch - the contents of which you unceremoniously dump into boiling water. The powder floats there, mocking you. Then you stir...and stir...and taste, trying not to burn your tongue...then you stir some more. Sorry...all the stirring in the world does not make this stuff taste any better. Mini marshmallows or not.

I used to make cocoa as a kid. It involved making my version of Hershey's Syrup since we could never manage to keep the real thing in the house for more than a few days. After the syrup was properly incorporated, I added hot whole milk. It was good but never had the depth of flavor I had hoped for...even as a kid!

I discovered after much trial and error that the one thing missing was a better representation from the milk. Wimpy milk taste just does not stand up to all that sugar and cocoa! It needs a little help.

I found the boost the milk needed in the form of Evaporated Milk. The concentration of all that milky flavor it provides is just the kick in the pants a proper cup of Cocoa needs. The best part is, you probably always have the ingredients in your pantry - no running out into a blizzard for fresh milk!

This is one your kids will love. It's super quick and there's nothing "tricky" about it like the addition of some exotic chocolate or new-fangled ingredient they only sell online at Dean & DeLuca (not that I'm against that or anything!). And it is not at all coyly sweet or as thick as mud. Just a really lovely drink everyone can enjoy and is so easy anybody can make it.

"I really do wear myself out trying to solve all these private food dilemmas in my head - mostly at 2am. There are issues I have right now I'm working on...but...I think it's safe to say, this mystery is solved!"

Little Patty's Hot Cocoa Anytime!

In a saucepan on top of the stove over low heat, stir together:

- 1/2 cup water
- 1/3 cup white sugar (or Equal®)
- 1/4 cup cocoa powder
- tiny pinch salt

Stir until the cocoa lumps are gone and a ring of tiny bubbles forms around the edges. Immediately add:

- 1 12 ounce can of Evaporated Milk
- 1 Tablespoon Vanilla Extract

Heat through and serve hot. Do not let it boil after the milk has been added.

A pinch of cayenne pepper added in is extra warming and usually how I drink mine!

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