



MAKE YOURSELF COMFORTABLE And Try an Irish Chai

There are few things more comforting during the winter months than holding a warm, boozy drink in your hands to soothe away the cold. Like a form of aromatherapy, the familiar scent of spices and evergreens in the air can put me into a nostalgic mood. It's no wonder I'm drawn to old favorites, like mulled wines and ciders, hot toddies and spiked coffees.

In doing "research" for this article, I discovered a new favorite drink that perfectly embodies the spirit of the season with only three ingredients. From a global perspective, it manages to unite the East and the West in a single sip.

We'll call it the Irish Chai.

Whether you're making tea for two or the whole gang, here's what you'll need:

Hot water. Chai tea. Irish cream.

Just put the kettle on. Find your favorite mug (the one with the moose antlers will do). Pour the hot water over two tea bags and steep for five minutes. Then, stir in a shot of Irish cream and make yourself comfortable.

It's an alternative to Irish coffee and can be as basic or as bold as you like. Try it with a splash of whiskey, cinnamon schnapps, or your favorite liqueur. Feeling festive? Top it off with some whipped cream and a sprinkle of spices. You could even add a shot of espresso.

Maybe stoking the fire in that turtleneck sweater has you craving something cool instead. Pour a little

Irish cream over some chai ice cubes and savor the flavors as they slowly meld together. There are so many ways to enjoy this drink; treat yourself to a taste test and find out what works for *you*.

Chai is a black tea with about a third less caffeine than coffee and is also available in decaf. Originally known in India as Masala Chai, meaning "mixed-spice tea," the ancient drink is popular all over the world for its aromatic blend of ginger, cardamom, cinnamon, star anise, fennel seed, peppercorn, nutmeg, and cloves. Add the Irish cream and you have the liquid equivalent of a warm hug.

Irish cream is a liqueur made with cream, sugar, your choice of flavoring, and good Irish whiskey. Where convenience is king, the bottled version—introduced in Ireland in the 1970s—will do the job. At up to 20% ABV, the debate rages on about whether or not it should be refrigerated after opening.

So, really, the Irish Chai is like an old friend of the family. It's spiced just right without tasting like potpourri. And while classified as a dessert cocktail, it's sweet without being too sugary. The only sweetener is the Irish cream, and a little goes a long way.

After the parties have ended, the snow has been shoveled, and your New Year's resolution is reduced to driving past the gym on the way to the liquor store—the Irish Chai will still be within reach, ready to melt those tensions away. ❄️

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