

## *Christmas Cheer – Wassail*

Wine & Dine with Dave Preston...

*The Guru of the Goodlife®*

**W**assail is an age old winter custom. It means, be of good health. It is drunk at Christmas time, New Years, and the Twelfth Night. It's roots all seem to point towards Great Britain, but the stories are many.

One custom in olde England is that the host proclaims, "Wassail," to which all reply, "Drink hail." Then the cup is past with a kiss to the next person and it continues until all have drank from it. This later became known as "the loving cup" with the introduction of Christianity.

Wassail is associated with caroling too. There are stories of men carrying a large vessel (some reports say a bowl with twelve handles, some say wooden, and some used pitchers) from house to house. They would sing, get the vessel filled again and go on to the next house.

Certainly no story of winter cheer would be complete without a Mulled Wine. Of all the options, mulled wine is my favorite. It's a classic wine-based drink that can be easily made ahead of time and served by the glass when family and friends pop over.

The history of Mulled wines date back to medieval times where these wines were named after the physician Hippocrates and called Ypocras or Hipocris. Thought to be very healthy, considering wine at the time being more sanitary than drinking water, these heated drinks probably did sustain their health through the cold winter months.. While you can buy a pre-mix and add it to a red wine, to get you in the mood of the season it's more fun to make it from scratch.

### **Ingredients:**

2 lemons	1 cup (250 ml) sugar (optional)
2 oranges	Herbal or citrus influenced tea
1 - 750 ml bottle Burgundy, Nutmeg (to taste)	(optional but excellent)
Cloves (to taste)	4 large cinnamon sticks
1 oz brandy or Cognac (or to taste)	4 candy canes
Water (optional softener instead of tea)	

### **Instructions:**

- Cut lemons and oranges into slices.
- Pour the red wine into saucepan and gradually heat.(don't boil- 160°)
- Add fruit slices, nutmeg, cloves and brandy.
- Keep an eye on the mixture and wait until it becomes hot to the touch.
- At this point you could blend in sugar or water (if desired).
- Pour into glasses/mugs and add tea (to taste).
- Garnish with cinnamon stick and candy cane.

Another great holiday cheer, not often heard of these days, is a *Tom and Jerry*. This was a tradition in the east that I grew up with and remember my Uncle Bill's favorite recipe. One account of the origins of the *Tom and Jerry* comes from the 1821 book, *Life in London; or, The Day and Night Scenes of Jerry Hawthorn, Esq., and his elegant friend, Corinthian Tom*, by Pierce Egan. This book was very popular and to further publicize it, Egan named a version of Egg Nog, the "Tom and Jerry". Pubs were even called "Tom and Jerries" for a while during this period.

The most popular theory, however points to Professor Jerry Thomas of pre-prohibition fame, and bartender at San Francisco's Occidental Hotel in the 1860's, as being credited with the creation of the Tom & Jerry. How the Tom & Jerry became a holiday tradition is not quite known. In earlier days however, it was quite popular and by old time standards, not to be served before the first snow. It was mixed in [Tom & Jerry bowls](#) and served in mugs of the same name. The recipe is simple, your favorite egg nog with as much whiskey as your taste buds desire! Carpe Diem my friends and make it a point to go out and live the goodlife!