

DRINK

Take Hot Cocktails Beyond the Toddy with Tea Syrups, Stocks and More

by Carly Fisher — FEBRUARY 3, 2017



During the inevitable bone-chilling nastiness of winter, bartenders usually have the good sense to have a kettle ready to whip up a hot toddy or Irish coffee for winter-weary patrons, but the fact is that classic hot cocktails can be kind of boring. So it should come as no surprise that crafty bartenders are elevating the ingredients—and temperatures—on their drink menus. Check out these takes on hot cocktails that go beyond the toddy.

Mull it over

Winter just wouldn't feel quite right

without the Germanic classic mulled wine known as *glühwein*, but why stick to a standard? Scandinavian-centric **Great Northern Food Hall** in New York plays up Nordic flavors by mulling wine with almonds and raisins macerated in aquavit and brandy. At **The Penrose**, also in New York, Punt e Mes vermouth tempers the sweetness and adds complexity to the mulled wine. "It's got more of a cocktail backbone than your typical mulled wine; it's a hot winter drink for real cocktail drinkers," bar director **Pete Vasconcellos** says.



Wine isn't the only booze worth mulling. At **LaRina Pastificio & Vino** in Brooklyn, **Giulia Pelliccioni** brews up a mulled Negroni using Campari, Mirto Argiolas (an herbal liqueur from Sardinia), NeverSink Aged apple brandy, lemon juice and a honey-clove syrup. In Madison, Wisc. **Graze** draws on the warming flavors of cranberry and citrus for the Rosencratz, featuring cardamom-infused aged rum, cranberry and orange liqueurs, cranberry-citrus syrup and lemon juice.

Just add water

Tea seems like a no-brainer for hot cocktails, but bartenders are leaning on slow-infused bottles and syrups to draw out herbaceous flavors. Guests nestled in front of the fireplace at **Dirty Habit** in Washington, D.C., can warm up with head bartender **Sarah Ruiz's** unconventional Train to Kyoto, featuring St. George Terroir gin and kombu-green tea topped with the textural addition of Furikake cotton candy.

Milk punches are having a moment in the cocktail world, but they're especially hot at **Cassia** in Santa Monica, Calif., where bar manager **Kenny Arbuckle** serves a heated version using Scotch tripled-infused with English Breakfast, Congou and Lapsang, and washed with whole milk. He adds English ale, an alpine herbal liqueur, bitters, salt and a quail egg for froth, then garnishes with cacao nibs for something a combo that's entirely unexpected.

No longer relegated to cold remedy status, toddies are seeing a revamp with global flavors. **Tavern62 by David Burke** in New York gives its hot toddy a South American spin. The Peruvian Nights is a mix of Pisco 100, matcha syrup and hot water, garnished with a floating lemon wheel. Four iterations of hot toddies are on the menu at **Sable Kitchen & Bar** in Chicago—though these hardly resemble the classic. Inspired by her time in the bathhouses of Russia, bartender **Laura Kruming** created the Platza Coffee: a steamy blend of Bombay Sapphire, Suerte Blanco, Zirbenz, lemon juice, black tea syrup and Angostura Bitters served in a teacup with smoked wood chips on a bed of rocks in a wooden box.

"The name Platza comes from a traditional Russian bathhouse treatment that involves being massaged with a hot-water-soaked *venik*, also known as a birch branch," she says. "I combined all of the aromas of the bathhouse and spa treatment—cedar, eucalyptus, pine, black tea, fresh gin botanicals and the earthy, clean flavors of Suerte tequila."

Splash of savory

Broths and fat washes are landing behind the bar, toeing the line between something a little savory and a full-on spiked soup. Bartender **Jimmy Swet** mashes up the perfect combo of chicken soup and hot toddy at New York's **JIMMY at The James**, pairing Nolet's gin with a chicken consommé, celery bitters and lemon juice, and garnishing it with parsley and carrot and celery sticks. Spiced tomato water and chicken *jus* serve as the base for The Hot Broth cocktail at **The Nomad**, also in New York, where **Shaun Dunn** mixes the stocks with amontillado Sherry and a few dashes of Pernod Absinthe for a comforting, sentimental warmer.

For the recent *A Christmas Story*-themed event at **Radiator** in Washington, D.C., lead bartender **Sarah Rosner** created the Bo Ling Chop Suey Palace Co.: a duck fat-washed Angel's Envy bourbon drink using duck fat from the restaurant's duck and waffles brunch dish, Giffard Abricot (a French apricot liqueur), house-made orange marmalade with chamomile citrus tea, lemon juice and hot water served in a teapot.

If you're going to turn up the heat, you might as well set it on fire. **Roka Akor** in San Francisco serves the flaming Blue Derby on its cocktail omakase menu, a drink inspired by Japan's annual Wakakusa Yamayaki festival, where revelers literally burn the grassy hillside of Nara's Mount Wakakusayama. As a fitting tribute, Bartender **Alex Riddle** ignites George Stagg barrel proof bourbon to cook a marbled slice of Wagyu beef, then uses two copper mugs to caramelize the ingredients with a mix of fresh lime juice, Carpano Antica, Triple Sec and bourbon that is nothing short of a stunner.

