

Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas

Peppermint and Egg nog, a taste of the holidays

By VIVA BOLOVA

The return of the holidays means the return of two favorite perennial flavors: peppermint and egg nog. Both treats conjure up images of friends and family gathering on wintry days and both have unique histories that have led to widespread uses today.

The peppermint taste we all know and love is the product of oil derived from the hybrid peppermint plant, a cross between water mint and spearmint. Along with its numerous health benefits such as having a natural calming effect, peppermint is also used to flavor a variety of treats from the classic candy cane to the famous York peppermint patty.

The latter was such a hit when first introduced in 1940 that the York Cone Company discontinued all other product lines to focus solely on making the chocolate-dipped mint. The peppermint candy cane, shaped to represent a shepherd's staff, actually has its beginnings in Europe over 500 years ago. The original candy lacked its iconic cane shape of today and was solid white.

Peppermint has also left its mark on another cool indulgence, ice cream. It's widely believed that French candy maker Francois Nicolas Appert was the first to incorporate it with ice cream in 1810. Today, ice cream makers like Blue Bunny offer seasonal peppermint flavors chocked full of peppermint candy bits.

Another favorite holiday flavor is egg nog. With its unique blend of ingredients and distinct taste, egg nog has long been a holiday staple. The frothy spiced drink usually consists of milk or cream, sugar, beaten eggs, ground cinnamon and nutmeg.

Its origins are debated, but many say it dates back to 17-century England where it was popular

among aristocrats. Some experts believe it descended from posset, a medieval European drink. The word "nog" is also rumored to have come from the Middle English word "noggin," or a small, wooden mug.

The drink came to the Americas not much later in the 18th century, where it fast became the drink of choice when toasting to good health. Today, egg nog's robust flavor has become synonymous with the holidays. Many ice cream makers have seasonal flavors inspired by the beverage. Try the recipes below for a tasty treat that will please everyone.

Egg Nog Ornaments

Ingredients

1 oz. or 1 square semi-sweet chocolate

6 tbs. dark chocolate ice cream topping

6 Blue Bunny Egg Nog ice cream sandwiches

Small Candy pieces (optional)

Directions

1. Freeze serving plate at least 15 minutes.

2. Combine chocolate and ice cream topping in small microwave-safe bowl. Heat on High 15-30 seconds, until chocolate can be stirred smooth. Do not overheat. Set aside.

3. Removing only one ice cream sandwich at a time from freezer, cut with favorite small cookie cutter, gently pressing with fingers or knife to remove from cookie cutter. Place bottom side up on frozen serving plate. Quickly decorate with small candy pieces, if desired. Return plate to freezer and repeat with remaining ice cream sandwiches.

4. Drizzle plate with warm chocolate sauce. Serve remaining sauce with ornaments. If desired. Ornaments may be prepared ahead of time and kept covered and frozen until serving time.

Winter wonderland



Winter pounded Norton with two snow storms this week. Park. Sunday and Tuesday both brought more than six inches of snow. The snow piled up quickly Sunday in Elmwood

—Telegram photo by Erica Bradley

Going sledding



Winter weather left almost a foot of fresh snow, which meant many local children with two days off from school enjoyed sledding in Elmwood Park. Temperatures came close to being above freezing Thursday afternoon when many kids were able to enjoy the snow.

—Telegram photos by Erica Bradley

CHRISTMAS COLORING CONTEST



The Norton Telegram is Sponsoring a Christmas Coloring Contest

Stop by the Norton Telegram or the Almema Market in Almema and pick up one of the nine designs. Return the colored picture to The Norton Telegram or the Almema Market no later than Wednesday, December 16. The pictures will be displayed in the lobby of The Norton Telegram for judging.

Prizes are being donated by: Norton Dairy Queen; Endzone; Garden Gate Florals Etc.; Norton Flowers Gifts and Greenhouse; Norton Animal Health Center; The Bank; Almema State Bank; Pizza Hut, and The Norton Telegram