

# NogBlog

## *The Not-So-Skinny on Eggnog*

*Ahhh* – frothy, thick, neat, on the rocks, brandy, rum, nutmeg or plain. Strong opinions abound on the holiday tradition of eggnog. For those of us who would like a sip, over ice, in July, to those who would just as soon see it in the same holiday recycling bin as the enduring, much maligned fruitcake, there are no shortage of do's, don'ts and e-yews.



Eggnog, pre-dates Colonial times – before the traditions of either Santa Claus or Christmas trees – and pours from the roots of England's earlier drinks, wassail and grog. Spirits of wine or ale were mixed with eggs, sugar and cream or milk. Early Americans, who could procure rum more cheaply than other spirits at the time (due to maritime trade routes), utilized it more readily than brandy or sherry, which were heavily taxed commodities by Great Britain.

As if I needed yet another reason to dub him my favorite President, George Washington's infamous concoction of eggnog made with brandy, rum, rye and sherry, delighted guests of his post-Revolutionary War holiday celebrations with this stiff drink as their centerpiece.

History tells of some 1826 West Point cadets, including a young Jefferson Davis, so enamored of eggnog that one Christmas their celebrating, which was against the rules, went into the early hours of the morning -- a morning that eventually lead to one murder, 19 court-martials and six resignations.

I prefer to contemplate eggnog's gentler side and happen to be fonder of it without the heavy-handed spirits. Although a touch of brandy or dark rum and a sprinkling of freshly-grated nutmeg is nothing short of ambrosial to an eggnog fanatic during the holidays.

Below, I have assembled some early tastings of store-bought eggnog for this season. After all, when you must have a 'hit' of nog, one doesn't always have time for beating eggs and cream oneself. I invite your personal eggnog recommendations and reviews. Please send them to [lisa@verbcommunications.com](mailto:lisa@verbcommunications.com). Our readers are from all over the world, so if you have a favorite local brand – or tradition – let us know! As I receive them, I will update this nod to nog.

**Chipwich** – this brand is new to me. It was a gift and while I am always a bit hesitant to try a new nog (*why waste a sip of this highly caloric drink on anything but a sure thing?*). The flavor of this eggnog is reminiscent of melting vanilla ice-cream; the color is white-white-white with no flecks of spices or other flavoring. If you've ever left a dip of vanilla ice cream to answer the phone, and come back to something that looks similar in size and shape to a 'scrubbing bubble'

melting into its own pool of cream, that's the flavor of this eggnog. Not bad if that's what you like, but then, I'd just get the ice cream. 180 calories.

**Organic Valley** – another gift; God bless the donor. This oyster-white, slightly flecked version of eggnog has a palatable, traditional flavor. I like the fact that it's organic – from the eggs to the sugar, but similar to soy milk, its finish is what I would call slightly 'chalky.' If you prefer organic, the taste is fairly close. Personally I prefer a slightly smoother feel. 180 calories.

**Giant Brand/Light** – when my husband brought home the Light version of the store brand, I shuddered at his subconscious choice (*or was it?*) to ignore my request for the full-on nog. While I am generally accepting of most "light" versions of things, eggnog would not be one of them. I was delightfully surprised at the rich buff color, looking very much like Cotswold stone as it glubbed into my glass of chipped ice. After grating fresh nutmeg on the top, this brand had me at "hello." The fact that it is a mere 85 calories also helps the cause, but the taste was so good, I forgot to look at the calorie count until now. The thought of being able to drink twice as much in half the time and still have a full-flavor eggnog experience has me giddy.

**Lucerne** (private label for Safeway, Inc.) – our taste tester – my brother, feels this brand may be a little runny for his taste; the flavor, he says, is palatable, but the texture is a little off. And it does have a gritty finish. I believe I've had Lucerne in the past and have not had the same opinion, but this motivates me to taste test it for future reference and a possible update.

**Rutters** – in another of my brother's evaluations, he tells **DISH!** that Rutters is yellow in color, full-flavored with a spicy tongue and 'posterior expanding finish.' Translation: he likes it too much! Excellent consistency – what the word "nog" brings to mind, he states. Rutters is produced in York, Pennsylvania and is widely available in the mid-Atlantic area. Two belt notches up.

### *Recipes for Homemade Eggnog Below*



## Homemade “Nog”

Several years ago, I attended a holiday soiree in Washington, D.C. and tucked on a corner table was a massive engraved silver punch bowl. Filled to the brim was a thick frothy white liquid, dotted with small islands of white foam, floating on the surface of this seemingly innocent party punch. I was told this bowl held the coveted, homemade eggnog made fresh from a traditional White House recipe. This particular batch, I understood, was created in complete secrecy – the real recipe of which I’ve yet to believe is truly available. That being said, I have found two that I am sure, in taste, are fairly comparable if you’re feeling ambitious enough to make them!

Recipe developed by White House Executive Chef Walter Scheiber\*

5 yolks  
5 whites  
1 1/4 cup sugar  
3/4 cup bourbon  
3/4 cup cognac  
3/4 cup dark rum  
1 quart milk  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
nutmeg  
vanilla extract



Combine yolks and sugar in bowl and beat to ribbon stage. Add bourbon, rum and cognac to yolk mix -- set aside. Whip egg whites and salt to stiff peaks. Whip cream to medium peaks. Fold whipped whites and cream together. Combine white/cream mix to yolk/liquor mix. Mix well. Add nutmeg and vanilla to taste. Adjust thickness with milk to desired consistency. Store very cold; blend well before serving.

*\*my understanding is that there was a ‘nog’ served in the Clinton White House that involved the addition of orange zest and American whiskey. If interested, you will find it online.*

-more below-

## “White House” Egg Nog

2 quarts purchased eggnog  
1 cup bourbon  
1/2 cup light rum  
1/2 cup brandy  
1 tablespoon vanilla extract  
1 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg  
1 quart eggnog-flavored ice cream



1. In large container, combine the eggnog, bourbon, rum, brandy, vanilla and nutmeg, mixing well. Refrigerate until just before serving.
2. At serving time, pour the eggnog into a punch bowl. Scoop small chunks the ice cream and float in the eggnog.

Makes 3 1/2 quarts.

However you celebrate your holidays, **DiSH!** wishes you delectable holiday feasts and good friends to share them with!