

YUMMY NORTHWEST

MARY ROSEWOOD, EDITOR AND PUBLISHER
LESLIE PHILLIPS, COPY EDITOR
KENT, WASHINGTONA TOAST TO
YUMMY NORTHWEST

The third anniversary celebration of **Yummy Northwest** began with a cheering toast by Oscar winners. By representing all **Yummy** readers, this editor already felt like a winner, but it was a special treat to dine with Nick Park and Steve Box (co-directors), Claire Jennings (producer), and Zennor Box (concept artist), some of the folks who created "Wallace & Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit," which won the 2006 Academy Award for Best Animation.

When dinner conversation turned to the poor quality of British and American produce, a discussion tinged with dismay, this editor explained that the goal of **Yummy Northwest** is to draw attention to caring, local farmers and local edible products. And naturally a toast was called for on that point.

Thinking about what you eat and enjoying what you eat are the foundations of **Yummy Northwest's** simple philosophy. This issue is filled with ideas, thoughts, and tributes relating to the enjoyment of hot chocolate, all supplied by eager readers.

And so, a toast to the **readers** of **Yummy Northwest!**



Places to go

Wherever you are in the world, you can find hot chocolate approved by discriminating **Yummy** readers. In Paris, find **Angelina's**, and in London, look for the **Max Brenner Chocolate Bar** in Harrods and the **Chocolate Society** near Victoria Station. On your way through Colorado, stop at the **Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory** in Boulder, where one reader learned the difference between hot cocoa and hot chocolate and, she says, "My life has not been the same since."



Enjoy chocolate!

"Researchers say that dark chocolate [the darker, the better] may protect the heart, reduce blood pressure, improve circulation, lower cholesterol, balance blood sugar, and help treat diabetes."

- *Naturally Preferred* magazine, February 2006

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Olympic Chocolate
Festival

400 W. Fir St.
Sequim, Wash.
April 22
10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
www.olympicchocolate.com

Find wonderful recipes on the Web site, including Frango Pie, a reminder of the nostalgic days of Frederick & Nelson.

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Need to find it?

Addresses for all locations mentioned in this issue are online at
www.rainydayrose.com/yummy/addresses

Closer to home, the **Wild Wheat Bakery** in Kent, Wash., is still a huge favorite with several readers. Nearby, the **Dilettante Mocha Café** has a new location at the Kent Station mall, along with their two original places in Seattle. **Tully's** is another favorite found throughout the Seattle area.

Readers suggest visiting the **Arosa Café** in Madrona, the **Chocolati Café** near Greenlake, and **Amore Chocolates** in Bellevue, Wash. In Seattle's Pioneer Square, **Zeitgeist Coffee** was recommended, and since Zeitgeist also supplies the **Plymouth Café** a few blocks away, why not swing by to try their version.

In Astoria, Ore., **Bach N Rock** is a groovy place to hang out and relax with George, the owner's agreeably lazy girl dog.

In Portland, there are many tasty places to explore. Recommendation comes high for **Zell's Restaurant** on the East Side, also known for its great breakfast selection. **Moonstruck**, with its expansive hot chocolate menu, is an understandable favorite of Portland **Yummy** readers.

Several readers who listed it as a top favorite will be disappointed to learn that Chantico is no longer served at **Starbucks**. A barista explained that the thick chocolate syrup was prepared ahead each morning and, in accord with company policy, any left over had to be thrown away at the end of the day. A previous **Yummy** taste test found that three cups of regular-strength hot chocolate could be made from one small cup of super-strength Chantico. Not your everyday beverage, but we do mourn its passing.

Make some at home

If you're stuck at home, try one reader's delicious-sounding idea: "I put a little milk in a mug and microwave it till it's hot. Then I add one serving of whatever chocolate I'm using, stir, nuke it about 30–60 seconds more, depending on microwave power, add more chocolate, and top off with milk so it's not boiling. I especially enjoy dipping pieces of chocolate – chips, Kisses, whatever – in the hot cocoa until it melts just a little, then licking off the melted part, or just stirring the chocolate piece into the cocoa."

What's hot....

"Hot" takes on a new meaning for readers who insisted that to really enjoy a cup of hot chocolate they add cayenne pepper, chili pepper, or hot sauce.

With acute skepticism, **Yummy** conducted a taste test with the help of PJ and husband J.

a taste test

Beginning with a recipe PJ found, called Spicy Mayan Cocoa Mix (middle column), we set out to discover what exactly the "hot" in hot chocolate means.

Surprisingly, peppers and hot sauce do not interfere with the chocolate but can indeed enhance it.

The Spicy Mayan Cocoa Mix had minimal sweetness, bringing out the deep chocolate flavor added by the cocoa nibs. The nibs also seemed to impart a delicate earthy taste that was very pleasant.

Added to regular cocoa powders (Dilettante, Ghirardelli, Hershey's Special Dark, and Scharffen Berger, all recommended by readers), cayenne and chili powders seemed to slightly heighten the chocolate flavor. A dash of vanilla, with or without the hot stuff, added a mellow tone.

Hot sauce is generally made with vinegar and would not be recommended if more than a drop or two were used.

spicy Mexican chocolate

We also tasted a spicy Mexican chocolate called Ibarra that comes in cakes that need the equivalent of a jackhammer to break them apart. To make a cup, whisk the chocolate pieces vigorously in hot milk – a wooden frothing tool called a *molinillo* is available for this process, but an ordinary whisk works fine. Ibarra is very sugary as is, and we found the cayenne agreeably cut the sweetness.

hot cocoa

Euphoric from the chocolate surging through our veins, we went on to see if there really was a difference between the cocoa powders we had on hand.

Stirred into a glass of hot milk, there was no obvious winner, with personal preference clearly being the determining factor. J decided that **Scharffen Berger** had a "dusky" flavor that might resemble what the cocoa nibs would taste like if ground to a powder. We all agreed that **Hershey's Special Dark** evoked cozy evenings in the kitchen with mom. **Ghirardelli**, while entirely enjoyable, had a plain "Swiss Miss"



cocoa pods

Hot chocolate is made with processed chocolate, often bittersweet. **Hot cocoa** is made with cocoa powder.

Spicy Mayan Cocoa Mix

Makes about 3/4 cup mix, enough for about 4 cups of milk.

- 1/4 cup chopped almonds
- 3 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2 tablespoons cocoa nibs (see note, below)
- 4 to 5 tablespoons light brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon allspice berries
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper, or to taste
- 1/2 teaspoon whole cloves

Combine all ingredients, and grind together in a coffee mill. To make cocoa, infuse milk with the mix to taste by heating gently for 10 minutes, then strain and serve hot.

Note: Cocoa nibs are roasted chocolate beans broken into small bits. They are nut-like and crunchy, with a mild chocolate flavor. You can buy them in Seattle at Fran's (www.franschocolates.com) or Rose's Chocolate Treasures (www.roseschocolatetreasures.com), or online at chefshop.com.

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taste compared to the others, possibly because it comes premixed with sugar. **Dilettante** didn't stand out as particularly special, but its fine quality means that the more powder you put in the cup, the better the chocolate flavor. (You can also get Dilettante cocoa powder with mint flavor added.)

further improvement

Other reader suggestions for improving hot chocolate include adding peppermint schnapps (this combination is a cocktail called a "Snuggle," according to one reader), Kahlua, or a shot of whiskey. Also, stirring any version with a peppermint stick adds another delicious dimension.

....and what's not

Don't drink the instant packaged stuff in the [insert your company's name] break room, warns one reader: "Pathetic." (Editor's note: There are exceptions. The **Yummy Northwest** staff room is well stocked with only the finest chocolate supplies.)

While one reader claims marshmallows on top of a cup of cocoa helped him through childhood, another was adamant: "Marshmallows spoil hot chocolate!"

A reader's plea

Sadly, several readers have recently told us they don't drink hot chocolate. Wondering if the annual hot chocolate issue provides more amusement than edification, **Yummy** asked a reader to respond. The reply:

"I'm sure all your faithful readers join me in supporting your efforts to document hot chocolate in all its forms! We just want you to *make* us some hot chocolate!"

Perhaps a hot chocolate party is called for to celebrate the fourth anniversary of **Yummy Northwest**. Watch for your invitation.

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This issue was powered by Dilettante's bittersweet Ephemere Sauce, used in 3 cups of hot chocolate. Special thanks to Smith Brothers Farms for the local milk.

About Yummy Northwest

Each monthly issue highlights an edible delight available in the Pacific Northwest. Online at rainydayrose.com.

Contact the editor

Comments, corrections, topic ideas, and submissions are all most welcome: Yummy_Northwest@hotmail.com