

Giuseppe Lamma's Bolognese Hot Chocolate (Circa 1660)

SOURCE: The Splendid Table (www.splendidtable.org)

Recipe halves and doubles easily.

From the court of the Bentivoglio family in Bologna during the 1600s comes this recipe for hot chocolate. Their cook, Giuseppe Lamma, was responding to the fashion of the day in writing a recipe for processing cocoa beans along with his own rendition of the drink, chocolate (the candy was still far off). Some historians claim Italians taught the art of chocolate making to the French and English in the 1700s. Another logical explanation is all the Spanish connections with those countries through diplomacy, noble marriages and alliances. After all, it was the Spanish who brought chocolate to Europe from the America's, and they adopted chocolate drinking with great enthusiasm.

Try this recipe as written - then you might want to substitute milk for the water. Serve as a dessert in small cups, or chill & spoon up as a cream.

- * 3-4 4-" cinnamon sticks, crushed
- * 2-4 8-" long vanilla beans, split (after using, dry & save for another recipe)
- * Zest of a small orange
- * Pinch salt
- * 1 C sugar
- * 2 qts (8 C) water
- * 4 oz unsweetened chocolate, chopped
- * 1-1/4 lbs bittersweet chocolate, chopped
- * 1-3 tsp vanilla extract (optional)

Combine all ingredients except chocolate & extract in 4-qt pot. Bring to simmer, cover & cook 5 minutes. Turn off heat, leave covered & let steep 15-20 minutes. Strain into 8-qt pot - set over medium heat, adding the chocolate - whisk till just below the boil, tasting for extra vanilla. Then froth by whisking vigorously. Ladle into small cups & serve hot.

Serves: 8-12