

Ken's Eggnog

Recipe 323 of 365

Based on my uncle Ken's recipe, this eggnog is the real stuff. We favor a combination of dark rum and cognac, but I think Ken used half rum and half brandy. No matter – just make sure you mix it up at least three weeks before you plan to drink it (four weeks is best), as the flavors mellow and blend over time. And the farther ahead you make it, the more opportunity you'll have to taste it. As Ken says, "Stir and taste, every day, if you can. Consequent shrinkage may argue for doubling the recipe."

This recipe is an excellent excuse/rationale for owning two bowls and two whisks for your stand mixer.

TIME: 30 minutes active time, plus regular stirring and four weeks aging

MAKES: Almost two gallons

12 extra-large egg yolks

1 pound confectioners' sugar

1/4 teaspoon salt

1 cup cognac

1 quart (about 4 cups) dark rum

3 quarts half and half

6 extra-large egg whites for nog, plus 6 more for serving

Nutmeg, for serving

In the work bowl of a standing mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, whip the egg yolks on medium speed until light, about 2 minutes. With the machine on low, slowly add the confectioners' sugar, and mix until blended. (No need to sift the sugar.) Add the salt and cognac, whisk to blend, and use a rubber spatula to scrape any sugar off the insides of the bowl, whisking on low and scraping until the sugar is totally absorbed into the liquid. Add the rum and one quart of the half and half (the liquid should come up almost to the top of the whisk), mix to blend, and transfer to a large mixing bowl. Clean and dry the bowl and the whisk.

Next, whisk six egg whites until thick and opaque but still soft (soft peak). Add the remaining 2 quarts cream, and whip again to mix. Transfer half of this mixture to each of two gallon-sized vessels. (I store my eggnog in two ceramic crocks with lids that seal closed.) There will be about 6 cups in each, including the foam.

Finally, stir the reserved mixture with the alcohol in it, and divide it between the two crocks, again about 6 cups into each. Stir to blend, and refrigerate for about one month, stirring (and tasting!) the eggnog once every few days, and ladling liquid from one crock to another, if you'd like the two crocks to taste identical.

To serve, whip 6 additional egg whites to soft peak, and fold into the eggnog. Serve cold, dusted with freshly grated nutmeg.