

MEN'S JOURNAL

Food & Drink

The World's Best Bartenders Reinvent a Winter Classic

FEB 8, 2016



Irish Coffee is an ideal cold weather warming cocktail, a mix of the buzz we crave with the caffeine boost we require.

There's a lot to love about this hot and steamy classic. "What makes this drink perfect for winter is that it is hot and it is comfort in a glass. When properly made, it makes people very happy. It is perfect for enjoying after a snow storm. There is something special about sipping the hot coffee through the cold cream," says bartending legend Dale DeGroff, who recently participated in an Irish Coffee Smack-Down vs. [The Dead Rabbit's](#) famous Irish Coffee, created by Sean Muldoon and Jack McGarry in New York City.

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DeGroff says that the ultimate Irish Coffee is no simple matter. "It is a serious drink, in which all of the elements have to be balanced and in harmony. The ratio of coffee to whiskey is critical. It is an ounce and a half of whiskey to 4 ounces of coffee, no more. Irish whiskey is ambrosia, with heather and honey notes. I recommend regular Irish whiskey rather than pot still expressions that are more assertive," says DeGroff. "You don't want any element to be a bully and take over the drink. The coffee has to be sweet, but the cream should never touch sugar. It should be hand-whisked over ice to retain its texture for the life of the drink. The finished drink should look like a pour of Guinness, with its black and white layers perfectly defined," says DeGroff.

And while we may imagine this warming cocktail has been a gift of the Emerald Isle for centuries, it's actually a relatively new discovery. "Irish Coffee didn't really become popular until 1952, when it made its way to the U.S. at The Buena Vista Cafe in San Francisco. They have served 35 million since then. It was adopted by Charley O's in NYC in 1960. There it became a staple at Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan's St. Patrick's Day Breakfast that was held annually for 20 years and attracted top civic leaders, notables and politicians," DeGross says.

Dale DeGross's Irish Coffee

Ingredients

- 4 oz. Dead Rabbit Sumatra Mandheling Coffee (hot)
- 1/2 oz. Demerara Sugar Syrup (2 parts Demerara sugar to 1 part water heated until the sugar dissolves)
- 1 1/2 oz. Premium Irish Whiskey
- Cream

Directions

1. Prepare the drink in an 8 oz. stemmed glass. Combine the coffee, sugar syrup and Irish Whiskey.
2. Hand whip the cream so that it still pours and floats on top of the coffee. Never sweeten the cream.

– Aly Walansky

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