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Indulge in inventive takes on eggnog

by Megy Karydes, Special for USA TODAY | *Published on December 5, 2014*

Americans love their eggnog, to the tune of roughly 122 million pounds consumed from the week before Thanksgiving through Christmas all the way to the New Year. The popular holiday beverage, which consists of eggs, milk, cream, sugar and an assortment of spices and spirits, has a fuzzy lineage, but that doesn't stop folks from enjoying it straight up or with a twist.

According to lore, the idea behind eggnog came from the Brits where a version of the hot and milky, ale-like drink was known as a posset in early medieval times. Monks were said to have enjoyed the beverage with eggs and figs while the wealthy class added milk and sherry and used the drink in toasts to prosperity and health.

Americans adopted eggnog in the 1700s around the holidays since chicken and cows were plentiful on their farms to produce two of the necessary ingredients. Rum was added to the recipe as cheap versions became more readily available.

To be considered a true eggnog cocktail, the drink must be made from at least 1% egg yolk. Creative bartenders and mixologists have created healthier versions since many traditional recipes can be as high as 400 calories a drink.

Resist the urge to buy the sugar-laced pre-packaged kind from the store and opt to enjoy a handmade one at the locations around the country in the gallery above this holiday season.

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The Eggman at San Francisco's Cotogna is made with a combination of gin, nocino (liquor made from green almonds), lemon, house made eggnog, St. Germain and nutmeg. The cocktail is topped with soda water and St. Germain foam, then finished off with a dollop of whipped cream. *Alex Orozco*