



The Mini Page

Next Week:
Reindeer

Issue 49, 2022

Founded by Betty Debnam

A Taste of Winter



photo by Aya Padron

Mini Fact:

In a study, about 33% of Americans said cocoa was their favorite holiday drink.

As the days grow colder and the holiday season approaches, many people like to settle in with a mug of hot chocolate. While some enjoy a simple cup of cocoa, flavored versions like peppermint have become popular in the winter months.

The Mini Page takes a look at both peppermint and cocoa this week.

Peppermint

Peppermint is an herb that's been used for thousands of years as a remedy, or treatment, for upset stomachs and other ailments.



photo by Anna Gregory

Peppermint plants are leafy and green. They are fairly simple to care for and grow, which makes them a popular choice for gardens and pots during warmer months.

How did peppermint become associated with winter? There are a few theories on that. Some people believe the cool, tingly flavor of peppermint brings to mind the snow and icy weather of winter.

Others think that peppermint has become popular during winter because the holiday season tends to be a time when people eat a lot, which can lead to indigestion, or

stomachaches. The cool, refreshing taste of peppermint helps calm upset stomachs.

Cocoa

Sometimes also called hot chocolate, cocoa is a warm drink made of milk, water, sugar and chocolate.

Cacao trees grow in South and Central America. These trees grow fruits, or pods, that contain cacao seeds, which go through a special process before they are ground up and become chocolate. Eventually that processed chocolate makes its way into stores.



photo by Scott

Cacao seeds were so valuable long ago that they were used as a form of currency, or money.

Over time, cocoa has seen lots of variations of flavor add-ins and enhancements. In ancient times, it wasn't sweet, and some people added chili peppers to it. It was often bitter and strong. Thousands of years ago, the Mayas drank a version of hot chocolate.

Through the 1800s, hot chocolate was used as a regular treatment for upset stomachs. This could be why the cocoa-and-peppermint combination make the ultimate refreshing winter drink for many people.

Peppermint Hot Chocolate

Here's a recipe you can make if you'd like to try peppermint hot chocolate. *Make sure to ask an adult for help.*

You'll need:

- 1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 cup water
- 4 cups low-fat milk
- 1 teaspoon peppermint extract
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

What to do:

1. In a small saucepan, combine cocoa and sugar and stir well.
2. Stir in water and bring to a boil.
3. Add the milk and cook on medium heat. Stir continually until heated, about 5 minutes.
4. Remove from heat and stir in the peppermint and vanilla extracts. Makes 5 (1-cup) servings.

Note: Feel free to top with whipped cream, marshmallows or a sprinkle of cinnamon.



photo by Orla40

Resources



On the Web:

- kids.kiddle.co/Peppermint

At the library:

- "Smart About Chocolate: A Sweet History" by Sandra Markle
- "The Story of Chocolate" by C.J. Polin

Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of peppermint and cocoa are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:

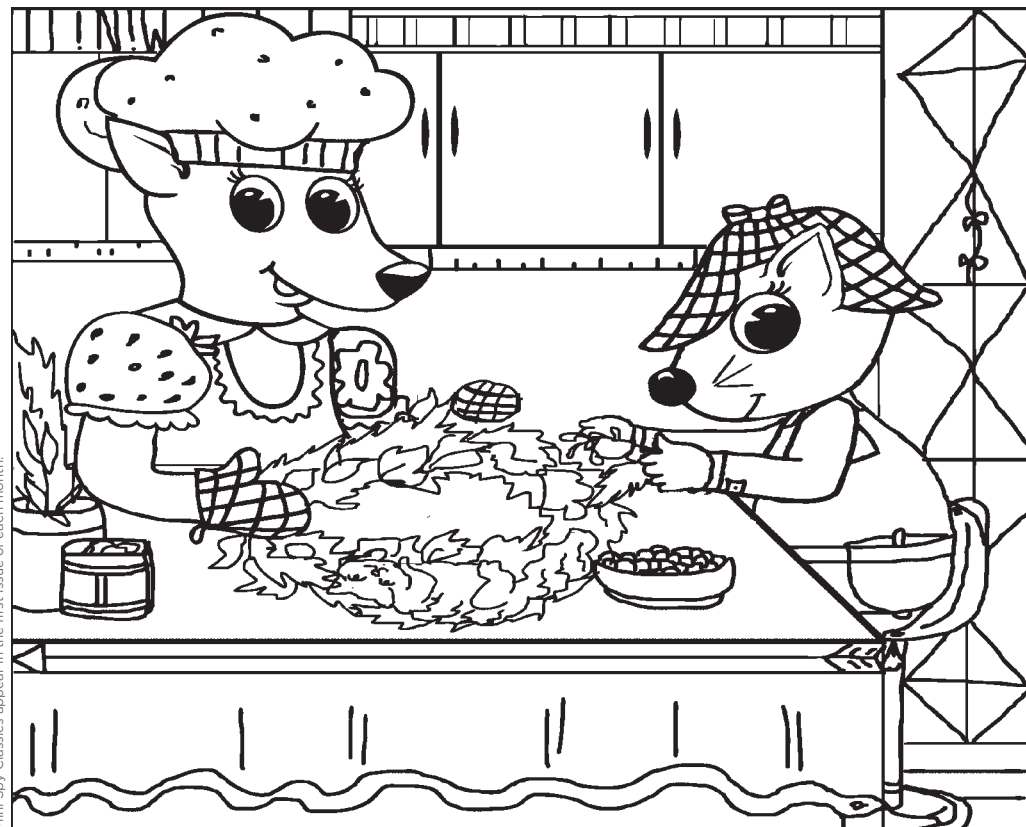


COCOA, CURRENCY, DRINK, FLAVOR, FOOD, GREEN, HERB, HOLIDAY, HOT CHOCOLATE, INDIGESTION, MAYAS, PEPPERMINT, PLANT, PODS, REMEDIES, SEED, TASTE, TREE, WINTER.

T V N Q P R T A S T E D G N P
G R E N O I T S E G I D N I L
Y B E X T N I M R E P P E P A
A R J E W M Y C N E R R U C N
D E D O A M F O O D X P X N T
I H A Y R O V A L F G R E E N
L P A D B R E T N I W B H J G
O S E I D E M E R K N I R D C
H W S D O P D E E S C O C O A
S H O T C H O C O L A T E O L

Mini Spy Classics

Mini Spy and Rookie are making a holiday wreath with evergreens. See if you can find the hidden pictures. Then color the picture.



- man in the moon
- arrow
- banana
- bell
- ladder
- letter H
- kite
- cat
- strawberry
- ruler
- word MINI
- pencil
- doughnut
- snake
- muffin

Mini Spy Classics appear in the first issue of each month.

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Mini Jokes



Peta: What kind of sweet is never on time?
Cameron: Choco-LATE!

Eco Note



British wildlife experts say they are "over the moon" happy with the successful return of ospreys to a nation where they had been extinct for more than 100 years. They were once hunted out of existence for sport and taxidermy, and their eggs were prized by collectors. But the reintroduction project has now led to about 1,500 of the powerful raptors soaring across England, Wales and Scotland. Chicks recently hatched in England for the first time in two centuries at Belvoir Castle in Leicestershire.

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For later:

Look in your newspaper for articles on seasonal drinks.

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