

Hot Toddy

The base of a hot toddy is booze, sugar and hot water. That's it. Variations on the theme abound, of course, but when 17th-century Irish folks concocted this for the first time, they did so because they were cold. The local booze was a standard pantry item and sugar helped the medicine go down. Make no mistake: The toddy's main value has always been medicinal. And you can write your own prescription.

Ingredients

ginger simple syrup

1/2 cup water

1/2 cup sugar

Two 1/4-inch-thick ginger coins

hot toddy

2 ounces Irish whiskey

2 teaspoons ginger simple syrup

1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice

Lemon wheel, for garnish

Directions

for the ginger simple syrup

Pour the water and sugar into a small saucepan. Drop in the ginger coins. Bring to just a simmer over medium-high heat and stir to dissolve the sugar, a few minutes. Let cool, keeping the ginger in the syrup. Store in a jar in the fridge until ready to use.

for the hot toddy

Fill a 12-ounce mug with hot tap water to warm it up. Put a kettle of water on the stove. When the water boils, turn off the heat. Dump the tap water from the mug. Pour in the whiskey, ginger simple syrup and lemon juice. Then pour in about a cup of the just-boiled water. Garnish with the lemon wheel and serve.

Cook's Notes

If you're feeling more honey than sugar — perhaps to stave off a sore throat instead of get the party rolling — make a honey-ginger simple syrup instead. Replace the sugar with 1/2 cup honey, reduce the water to 1/4 cup and follow the rest of the instructions. And feel free to up the ginger for a bigger punch, as you see fit.

total time: 10 minutes + cooling

active prep: 10 minutes

serves: 1

difficulty: *easy*