

DRINKS OF THE 18TH CENTURY

Tavern accounts, personal diaries, letters and travellers' journals all show that drinking was a popular "entertainment" in the 18th century. The beverages described here are all mentioned in American and Canadian sources from around the time of the American Revolution.

RUM The least expensive and most popular spirit (distilled liquor). Rum was both imported from the West Indies and made in New England and New York from imported molasses. West Indies rum was considered better and sold for about one third more than locally-made rum.

BRANDY A spirit made by distilling wine. Popular, but more expensive than rum. The availability of French brandy varied depending on the conflicts between Britain and France.

WINES Popular wines included Madeira, Port, Claret (Bordeaux) and Rhine Wine. Madeira and Port were fortified by adding brandy. Madeira was by far the most popular wine at the time.

BEER and CIDER Beer was rarely mentioned as being drunk in taverns outside of the Southern U.S. There were a few commercial breweries in large cities, but it was often brewed at home and drunk with meals. The exception was Porter, a dark beer imported from England, Cider, like beer, was typically made at home.

SPRUCE BEER There were many recipes for beer using the tips of spruce branches or essence of spruce with molasses, hops and other ingredients. Like beer and cider, it was not considered a serious alcoholic drink. It was known to prevent scurvy, and was sometimes provided by armies to soldiers.

MIXED DRINKS

GROG A mixture of rum and water. No set proportions.

PUNCH By far the most popular mixed drink. The typical recipe called for a spirit (rum or brandy), citrus fruit (limes, lemons or occasionally oranges), sugar (white or brown) and water. Nutmeg could be grated on top. There were no set proportions, but "sower" or "lime" punch (heavy on the citrus) was often mentioned. Punch could be served hot or cold.

To make Punch

Take five Pints of boiling Water and one Quart of Brandy, add to it the Juice of four Lemons or Oranges, and about six Ounces of Loaf Sugar; when you have mix'd it together, strain it thro' a hair Sieve or a Cloth, and put into your Bowl the Peel of a Lemon or Orange.

From *English Housewifery*, 1750