

Rum Punch

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Christopher Testani for The New York Times. Food Stylist: Monica Pierini.

Total Time 15 minutes

Rating ★★★★★ (221)

Said out loud, the rough recipe for Trinidadian rum punch hints at the rhythm of the Caribbean: One sour. Two sweet. Three strong. Four weak. A dash of bitters. A sprinkle of spice. Served well chilled, with plenty of ice. An easy-drinking cocktail, this punch gets its deep notes from punchy lime and woodsy-sweet nutmeg. Like many spirits of yesteryear, Caribbean rum tells a greater story — of colonialism and sugar plantation slavery, as well as the enterprise of the West Indian people. In this big-batch recipe, the complex flavors bloom into a bright, expressive libation that truly goes the distance.

INGREDIENTS

Yield: 8 to 12 servings

1½ cups light or dark brown sugar
16 limes
2½ cups good dark Caribbean rum
(such as Ten to One)
4 teaspoons Angostura bitters
2 teaspoons freshly grated nutmeg
(from about 1 whole nutmeg seed),
plus more for garnish
3 cups ice, plus more for serving
Lime slices, for garnish (optional)

PREPARATION

Step 1

Make a brown sugar simple syrup: Add the brown sugar and 1½ cups water to a small saucepan. Stir to combine, then heat over medium and cook until the sugar dissolves, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat and set aside. (Makes about 2½ cups.)

Step 2

While the simple syrup is simmering, juice the limes into a large bowl until you have 2 cups lime juice and pulp. Add 1¾ cups of the simple syrup, plus the rum, bitters and nutmeg; stir to combine.

Step 3

Using a fine-mesh sieve, strain the punch into a large pitcher. Add 3 cups ice and stir until most, if not all, of the ice has melted and the pitcher is cool to the touch. (Taste the punch at this point and, if desired, add more simple syrup or lime juice.) If not serving right away, refrigerate up to 2 days.

Step 4

Serve in ice-filled rocks glasses. Garnish with grated nutmeg or a lime slice, or both.

TIP

The remaining brown sugar simple syrup can be stored in the refrigerator in an airtight container for at least 2 weeks and used to sweeten iced tea or coffee.

Private Notes

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