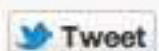


FEATURED, HEALTHY EATING | Comments: 2
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Ciderist Greg Hall Shares a Recipe for Hot Spiced Cider

Though we tend to associate cider with fall, a recent conversation with apple enthusiast Greg Hall of **Virtue Cider** reminded us that cider can serve as a hot winter drink as well. Hall, a beer expert and former head brewmaster of **Goose Island**, expects to launch his brand of hard cider, with the tagline "farm to bottle," this spring. He shared a recipe for a warm cup of nonalcoholic spiced cider.

Hall, who lives in Chicago, has been learning about spirited cider from experts in England and Normandy, and he's also talking with American farmers about heritage fruit. (Each of Hall's ciders will be made with different types of apples — RedStreak can currently be previewed on the website.) "Orchards of apples are good for the planet, good for the air," Hall says. He also notes orchards also provide habitats for plants, birds and animals — and bees love apple blossoms.

And apples are good for us too — they're full of cancer-preventing flavonoids. There's evidence that the unfiltered juice can help fight "bad" cholesterol to reduce the risk of heart disease.

To make a healthful hot drink, start with pressed cider, not juice, since fresh cider is raw and unfiltered. (We buy ours at the local farmers market.) As to spices, Hall likes "cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves — Christmassy fall spices." Recent studies indicate that cinnamon has a beneficial effect on blood sugar and bad cholesterol; cloves contain eugenol, which helps to fight inflammation; and nutmeg helps to lower blood pressure.

A bonus: The hot spicy cider makes our home smell wonderful. If the juice is tart, then follow Hall's lead and add a little local honey.

Simple Hot Cider

8 ounces apple cider
6 cloves
1 stick cinnamon
1 pinch nutmeg
Honey to taste (optional)

Put all ingredients in a pot. Heat to steaming, but do not allow to boil. Keep at a steam for 2 minutes. Strain into a cup. Garnish with a cinnamon stick.

NUTRITION SCORE (per serving)

114 calories
Fat 0.3 g (0 g saturated)
Carbs 28 g
Protein 0.2 g
Fiber 0.5 g
Calcium 20 mg
Iron 0.3 mg
Sodium 10 mg



Warm spiced cider makes for a perfect wintry drink.