



Perspective

By JAMIE BUCKINGHAM

Once a year, maybe twice, I develop a deep craving for eggnog.

Also, once a year, maybe twice, I develop a craving to cook something in the kitchen. Unfortunately, this year my craving to cook and my craving for eggnog arrived simultaneously. When I announced my intentions, my wife said she was taking the children and leaving for the day. "I'll be back and clean up your mess later," she said.

The Better Homes and Gardens Cookbook receipt called for two egg yolks mixed with sugar and then mixed with four cups of milk. This was to be warmed over medium heat until the mixture "covered the spoon." Already I was in trouble. The mixture covered the spoon even before I warmed it. I'm sure that "cover the spoon" is a technical term understood by eggnog-makers, but it left me cold. I could see I was in for a bad afternoon.

I forged ahead, however, and heated the mixture. It tasted good. Real good. In fact, it was so good I doubled the receipt. That was my second mistake. Don't ever add egg yolks to anything hot. They do something strange. The result was something we later came to call around the house egg-drop eggnog.

The only sieve I could find to strain out the scrambled eggs was a colander. But, as I sadly found out, colanders strain sideways as well as up and down and a lot of the eggnog wound up on the floor. Again I doubled the receipt to make up for that which had spilled.

The next step was to beat the egg whites until fluffy and then "fold in" to the other stuff. I sensed that "fold in" was another technical term that was going to give me trouble. But I didn't have time to worry about it because I never could get the egg whites to beat to begin with. All they did was swish around in the bottom of the mixer bowl. How was I to know I should have added the sugar later?

Thinking that a pint of whipping cream which I found in the refrigerator would help them whip, I added it. All it did was swish around in the bottom of the bowl some more and then swish out all over the floor.

By this time I had added another two quarts of liquid on the stove and doubled the number of eggs to make up for those I had to strain out earlier. I had also shifted from the original sauce pan to the bottom of the roaster. This, combined with an old double-boiler which I found in the bathroom while looking for the burn ointment, gave me almost enough containers to hold the seething liquid which seemed to expand under heat.

Approximately one hour, two broken eggs and one scalded cat later (Mrs. Robinson got on the stove while I was cleaning up the eggs and stuck her paw in the boiling mixture and then knocked the sugar on the floor), I was ready to "fold in" the swishing egg whites.

Taping the steam hole on the top of the roaster pan closed, I used it for a fourth pan and mixed everything together. The receipt said add nutmeg and vanilla "to taste" (obviously another technical term). Since I like both I added a lot. Wow!

I have heard you can get stoned on nutmeg. Whether it's that, or the half cup of vanilla extract, or simply the bubbling egg-drop eggnog, we now have 2½ gallons of the most potent "non-alcoholic" brew imaginable. Even though I'm the only one who drinks it, once you shake it up to break the crust on top and strain out the lumps with your teeth, it's not too bad. It seems it gets better with age, which is fortunate, for it looks like it's going to be around the house a long time.