

Wassail!

Here we come a-wassailing
Among the leaves so green,
Here we come a-wassailing,
So fair to be seen:
Love and joy come to you,
And to you your wassail too,
And God bless you and send you,
A happy New Year,
And God send you,
A happy new year.

Did you sing along as you read the words to the song? Me too!

Wassail comes from the Anglo-Saxon phrase, “waes heal” which means “good health!”

The tradition of Wassailing was basically making a fortified drink of spiced hot hard apple cider and offering a drink to one’s good health! It was usually cooked over the fire and then transferred to a very large cup that everyone would share, including the neighbors if you should care to go knocking and invite them to partake. It was also shared as a blessing on the apple crops for the next year. Traditionally one would go Wassailing on New’s Years Eve and Twelfth Night.

So why not brew up a big ol’ cup of Wassail on Twelfth Night, January 5th, to share with your loved ones and say, “God bless you with Good Health this year!” “God bless your crops that they prosper you in the new year!”

Say it with me as I raise my glass to you, “Wassail!”

“To your health, to your prosperity, and many more blessings upon you and yours this year!”

- Kelly Shippey
- Fresh Hot History

Ingredients:

- 4 small Fuji, Pink Lady, or Crab apples
- 4 tablespoons of honey
- 4 bottles of hard apple cider, or 2 quarts apple cider (for non-alcoholic version)
- 1/2 cup brandy (omit for non-alcoholic version)
- 1 tablespoon nutmeg (or half of a small nutmeg ground over the pot)

1 tablespoon powdered ginger (or 1 inch section of ginger root, smashed)
1 tablespoon cinnamon (or 2-3 cinnamon sticks)
1 teaspoon allspice (or 6 allspice berries)
1/4 teaspoon cloves (or 10 whole cloves)
1/2 teaspoon mace (1 blade of mace)
*6 eggs, separated

Directions:

Preheat oven to 375°. Scoop out the core of each apple and fill with the honey. Place the apples on a baking sheet and roast for 25 minutes.

Meanwhile in a very large stock pot over medium-low heat, add together the apple cider, and brandy. Whisk in the ground spices. (If using whole spices, then tie them up in a cheese cloth sack and place in the hot cider.) Turn the heat to low.

Beat the egg whites to hard peaks. Beat the yolks to a light color and doubled in size. Fold the yolks into the whites. Temper the eggs with 1/2 cup of the hot cider mixture. Then slowly add the egg mixture to the hot cider. Remove from heat and place in a large bowl. Float the baked apples in the bowl.

*Note: Most modern recipes leave out the eggs, as they are only barely cooked in the liquid, so if you wish, you may do so and you will still have a very lovely hot spiced cider! However, I would strain the liquid as I transferred it to the bowl, to remove any of the larger clumps of spices.

You can make your wassail in a crockpot, just turn it on high for 20 minutes and then decrease the heat to low and serve from there!

Enjoy,
Wassail!