**Old-Fashioned Hot Chocolate**

*from www.thespruceeats.com*

**Ingredients**

* 2 ounces unsweetened chocolate
* 1/3 cup white granulated sugar
* 4 cups whole milk
* 1 pinch salt
* 1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
* Marshmallow creme or fluff, or whipped cream for garnish

**Steps to Make It**

1. In a 2-quart saucepan, place the chocolate, sugar, milk, and salt. Over medium-low heat, stir gently with whisk until the chocolate melts and the mixture is well blended.
2. Remove from the heat and stir in the vanilla extract.
3. Pour the hot chocolate into mugs and top with a spoonful of marshmallow creme or whipped cream, if desired.

**Tips**

* Keep your hot chocolate warm longer by serving it in preheated mugs. Either fill each cup with hot water while you're making the drink or heat water-filled cups in the microwave for 10 seconds. Dump out the water before pouring the hot chocolate.
* Adjust the amount of sugar to suit your taste. For instance, ¼ cup is good if you prefer a drink that's less sweet.
* If you only have semi-sweet or sweetened chocolate available, you may not need to add any sugar. Melt the chocolate and milk mixture first, taste it, then decide if it needs a tablespoon or two of sugar.

**Variations**

* Create a richer hot chocolate by replacing 1 to 1½ cups of the whole milk with half-and-half or light cream.
* Transform the drink into a grown-up grasshopper by adding 2 ounces of crème de menthe and ½ ounce of crème de cacao. A shot of peppermint schnapps creates an adult hot chocolate, while the midnight snowstorm recipe adds a drizzle of green crème de menthe on top.
* Make spiced Mexican hot chocolate with the addition of ¾ teaspoon of ground cinnamon and a dash of ancho chili powder. Add a cinnamon stick to each cup and top with a dollop of whipped cream.
* For cinnamon hot chocolate, stir in 1 scant teaspoon of ground cinnamon.
* Add 2 tablespoons of instant espresso powder to the saucepan along with the chocolate, sugar, milk, and salt to create mocha hot chocolate.