

# CHOCOLATE

## CLASSIC MAYA BEVERAGE

For centuries, the Maya controlled the lucrative production and distribution of *kakaw* (cacao) throughout Mesoamerica. And throughout those centuries, cacao was converted into a beverage – not a sweet treat. Cacao beans were fermented, sun dried, roasted and ground into a thick paste. The paste was then formed into a tortilla-shaped patty. Dairy was not available until the Spanish introduced cattle into the New World, so the patty was dissolved in water. The chocolate beverage was traditionally served hot or cold, sweet or savory, and included such ingredients as allspice, vanilla, honey, chile, salt and *achiote*. The resulting chocolate beverage was poured back and forth between two gourds or pots to aerate it and produce a froth. Our recipe includes several of the traditional ingredients and is served sweet and hot.

8-10 SERVINGS

### ☞ PREPARE THE MILK BASE ☞

- **3 cups (710ml) whole milk**
- **1 cup (236ml) whipping cream**  
*(Note: For the diet conscious, any combination of skim/whole milk/cream will do as long as the final measure is 4 cups.)*
- **1 Tbs. (15ml) cornstarch** *(Optional)*

**STEP 1 IN A LARGE SAUCEPAN**, heat the milk and cream until simmering around the edges. For a slightly thicker drink, place one ladle of the hot milk mixture into a small bowl and add the optional cornstarch; whisk until incorporated, then whisk cornstarch mixture back into the saucepan. Continue whisking over medium heat until mixture thickens. Reduce heat; check and stir frequently to avoid scorching.

### ☞ FINISH AND SERVE ☞

- **8 oz. (230g) bittersweet chocolate**
- **1/2 tsp. (2.5ml) vanilla extract**
- **1/4 tsp. (1.25ml) ground allspice**
- **Scant 1/8 tsp. (.60ml) cayenne powder, or to taste**
- **1 Tbs. (15ml) honey**

**STEP 2 ADD REMAINING INGREDIENTS** to the hot milk mixture; continue whisking over medium heat until chocolate is completely dissolved and a froth appears. Check flavorings and serve immediately.