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CALIFORNIA ALMONDS
Blue Ribbon Idea
CHINATOWN ALMOND CHICKEN

This is a little wok, but it's worth it. Skin, bone and cut 1½ pounds chicken breast in ½ inch cubes. In bowl mix 1 tsp. ginger, 2 tsp. sugar, 1 tbsp. cornstarch, blend in 3 tbsp. each water and soy sauce, and ½ cup sherry. Thaw 2 (6-oz.) pkgs. Chinese pea pods. In wok (or skillet) heat ¼ cup oil over medium heat. Add 1 cup BLUE RIBBON Natural (or Blanched) Whole Almonds; stir and cook about 3 minutes. Add chicken and cook just till meat turns white. Pour in sherry mixture; cook till sauce thickens. Add pea pods; stir-fry till hot and glazed. Serve at once. Serves 4.

CONTINENTAL
NUT COMPANY
Chico, Calif.

Beyond Eggnog

Brightly colored, aromatic cordials are a liquid dessert that will satisfy more than your sweet tooth. They're a tangy way to end a holiday meal or begin an evening. By Bert Greene

Time was, the only drink deemed fitting to salute the yuletide was eggnog or a mug of stinging-hot glögg. Happily, the urbane host in the 1980s is no longer so tradition-bound and may even skip the wassail bowl entirely.

Liqueurs are a recent American taste acquisition. These delicate fruit, flower and spice distillations are among the most sensual spirits known to man. They are written of in the Bible, yet until a decade ago, less than a third of the drinking population in the U.S. had ever tasted a drop.

The principle of liqueur is the combining of some flavorful aromatic (fruit, almonds, coffee—you name it!) with fine brandy. And the amazing versatility of liqueur is best demonstrated in the hands of a creative barman. Sample the subtle layering of a *kir* (that Burgundian notion of combining whitest wine with a seasoning of black currant liqueur), then consider the mix with a spot of orange (Grand Marnier, Triple Sec or Oranger) for an entirely different taste.

Some of my most pleasurable party beverages have been inaugurated by chance and good luck. When unexpected guests arrived after a substantial Thanksgiving dinner one time, I hastily poured a decanter of fresh apple cider over ice—only to discover a shocking absence of Calvados (distilled apple brandy) in the liquor cabinet. To my good fortune, however, I unearthed CoconRibe (coconut rum), instead, and another holiday punch was born.

Punch is never my favorite drink. But it is very often a practical party necessity. The ones I serve are never cloying and are invariably based on the following elements in varying proportion: fresh (or frozen) fruit juice for a base, vodka or possibly brandy for a kick and some aromatic liqueur floated over the ice to bond the flavors.

A discreet lacing of apricot brandy or Cherry Heering will, for instance, make a whole new drink of simple, old-fashioned lemonade served over a block of ice. Or, consider lime juice (fresh or bottled) combined with equal parts of tequila and coconut amaretto, and light-

ened with crushed ice a daredevil version of a fr Orange juice and vodka standby of brunch, dev sunnier disposition at a when it is amended by a j Marnier liqueur. Serve 1 snifters with slightly soft cream floating on top. known convivially as "a j is like imbibing pure liqu it can be deceptively leth

The liqueur craze, i bringing a lot of dusty b the kitchen cabinet ag these unusual mixtures: r Midori liqueur; froze sashed with cream, an light rum and crème de c strained before it hits the my most agreeable punch amaretto, a sweet liqu crushed almond macaroo a tart adjunct like cranb sweet potion like simple vored milk. But, rememb must never exceed one total beverage.

Another unusual holid once served was not a dr zabaglione—a dessert ma guests' eyes. This Italian c ting of egg yolks, a bit Marsala wine, was whis copper chafing dish and demitasse cups with a side. Which brings me creation.

A good cooking friend serves dessert after meal claims to hate sweets. (I assiduously at my table, l An hour after dinner she ses round *iced* cold capp made and well laced w some other coffee liqueu the glasses are always di juice and frosted with gr Each drink is finally whipped cream, seasonec and dusted with cinnamo

If it sounds like liquo you are not far wrong. B possibilities in a punch b