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They are tender antidotes for the winter chills. For frostbitten toes and bones that won't thaw out, Toronto cafés conjure temperature-raising drinks guaranteed to crank up the heat when the cold winds blow. Wrap your icy fingers around a hot mug of steaming cocoa or spicy mulled wine, or take a nostalgic trip back in time with a modern-day Ovaltine latte.

Mittens, toques and parkas provide a barrier between you and the cold, but only a hot drink works from the inside out. According to Janine Bain, a regional manager for the Red Cross, a warm drink goes a long way to taking the chill off. Even people suffering from mild hypothermia — when their core body temperatures fall even one or two degrees below normal — will benefit from a warm drink. (In serious cases of hypothermia, though, she advises against stimulants such as tea, coffee and alcohol.) If you're simply feeling chills brought on by drop in the mercury, nip it in the bud with one of these 10 establishments' cold weather drinks:

C'est What, 67 Front St.: While most Canadians traditionally think of beer as a refreshing summertime beverage, there are certain brews that have the opposite effect. They'll wrap you in a warm blanket and soothe you till the shivers disappear. Try C'est What Coffee Porter, St. Ambroise Oatmeal Stout (McAuslan Brewing, Montreal), Steve's Dreaded Chocolate Orange (brewed by C'est What, it's dark and chocolaty with hazelnut notes, bittersweet orange peel and a touch of cardamom), and 10-W-30 (dark, malty sweetness) from Neustadt Springs Brewery.



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Soma Chocolatemaker, Distillery District: Try their "intoxicating elixir of dark Peruvian chocolate, chili peppers, Madagascar Vanilla, ginger, orange peel" and a "secret blend of Soma spices." This intense liquid, served in a shot mug, sticks to the roof of your mouth and coats your teeth. It is also served in slightly less potent formula, in a mug tempered with steamed milk or hot water.

Balzac, Distillery District: Wrap your frozen hands around a hot glass of the café's Hot Cintro Booster, a warming mixture of lemon, ginger and maple syrup. Balzac's interior is distinctly French, with antique marble floors and quaint café tables and chairs. But if you're feeling patriotic, try the Café Canadian, a sweet café au lait with maple syrup.

Fresh, 894 Queen St. W.: Their peppermint hot chocolate is prepared with your choice of skim, 2-per-cent or whole milk. Sweet and refreshing.

Ella's Uncle, 916 Dundas St. W.: Travel back to your childhood with an Ovaltine latte. The smell and the taste will conjure memories of bedtime.

Om Restaurant, 1439 Queen St. W.: Their simple Tibetan buttered tea is made to an exacting recipe that originated among nomad cultures. The butter provides caloric energy and makes the tea particularly warming. It takes 15 minutes to steep, then butter, salt and milk are added to the brew. Because the milky drink is salty rather than sweet it can catch the unfamiliar off guard. And even then the warming mixture can take some getting used to.

La Merceria, 506 Adelaide St. W.: Beneath the white froth of a toasty almond tea latte lurks a warm, pink, nutty-flavoured brew. The taste emanates from a sachet of tea leaves, roasted almonds, apple, cinnamon and beetroot immersed in the cup. Half home accessories boutique and half café, La Merceria provides a chic respite when cold winds blow.

Kalendar, 546 College St.: Their mulled wine is spiced with cinnamon and cloves and sweetened with honey. It comes in a small ceramic carafe with a shot-sized cup, and is smooth and sweet with a distinct taste of cloves. The popular restaurant also has apple cider and a Kalendar hot toddie, brandy with a honey-and-citrus twist spiced with cloves.

Sense Appeal Coffee Roasters, 96 Spadina Ave., Suite 101: Try their Turkish Coffee spiced with cinnamon and cardamom. Everything is seasonal, says owner Sameer Mohamed, so sadly their pre-Christmas candied chestnut coffee is over for the year.

Herbal Infusions Tea Co., 404 Adelaide St. W.: Their cocoa tea, brought in from an estate in Venezuela, uses only the beans' discarded husks, says owner Dan Johanis. It has the flavour of coffee with the soothing qualities of tea. Johanis says it is a natural mood enhancer and antidepressant, offering the same buzz as chocolate but without the caffeine. The shop, which has only been open one month, is kicking off 2011 with a "Kick the Coffee" campaign by offering visitors a free steeped tea from Jan. 10-14. Herbal Infusions carries more than 100 kinds of loose tea, as well as all-natural cane and beet sugars including tangerine, key lime and coconut.