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Hangover Helpers From Around the World

Try these remedies if you celebrate too much this holiday season.

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New Orleans may not have as many seasons as the rest of the country, but we have a season others don't. We have a bimodal hangover season that begins in December, peaks at New Year's Eve and then insidiously crests at Mardi Gras. I contacted mostly non-native New Orleanians to catalog what special cures and potions they packed from home.

Mauritius:

French lentil soup. *Chef Dominique Macquet from Mauritius, an island with French and English influences*

Eastern Kentucky:

An old Appalachian hangover cure is to pour out half of a 20-ounce Coca-Cola and refill with buttermilk. Shake well and drink in one gulp. *Sarah Baird, culinary writer*

Ireland:

My Irish Grandma Nellie always advised two cups of hot tea with condensed milk, two pieces of white toast with butter, two aspirins and then back in bed for an hour. Works every time. *Inez Bucaro, New Orleans attorney blessed with both Irish and Italian grandmothers*

Japan:

Congee with plum (a rice dish). *Chef Nao of Sugiyama, New York City's premiere Japanese food bar*

Colorado:

Two ounces of bloody mary mixed with a 12-ounce Amber Ale and seasoned with Lea & Perrins and lemon. We call it a red fat tire. *Brooke Becker, server at Restaurant R'evolution*

New York:

Nux vomica. I just love the sound of it. It was actually part of a combination of things, but I can't remember what, and the druggist

who gave me the remedy has since died – possibly of strychnine poisoning? *John Berendt, author of Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil and The City of Falling Angels*

Branson, Mo.:

I am performing in Branson, Mo., right now. If I had a hangover I would catch the first flight back to New Orleans for a bloody mary made by Donna with secret added ingredients at the Touché Bar (Omni Royal Orleans). Kisses. *Gennifer Flowers, former resident of Arkansas*

France:

Viandox. Combine Maggi, celery salt, and hot water as a substitute for the real stuff. More salt and flavor than plain beef bullion. *Rene Bajeux, New Orleans chef born in France*

Turkey:

Tripe soup. Restaurants in Turkey stay open late on New Year's Eve dishing it out. *Rue Morrison, former owner of Delk and Morrison now living on a sailboat in Turkey*

Vietnam:

The best cure for a hangover is pho, the Vietnamese beef soup with noodles. *Minh Thanh Nguyen, Vietnamese American Young Leaders Association of New Orleans*

Germany:

Keep sipping beer. *Gunter Preuss, chef currently with pop-ups at Eleven 79*

Mexico:

Another shot of Tequila or a Michelada – beer with chili and lemon. *Isaac Musselwhite, retired Archbishop Rummel English teacher now in Guanajuato, Mexico*

Sydney, Australia:

Berocca: An effervescent spewing of vitamins and stuff when added to water. Berocca gives you back your bounce according to the ads. *Michael Reynolds, filmmaker and bartender at Marti's Restaurant*

New Orleans:

There is nothing better than double or triple strength dark roast coffee with chicory. The Internet may say the Sicilian cure is eating a dried bull's penis, but I never heard of that. *Joe Segreta, Eleven 79 restaurant*

Ya Ka Mein

New Orleans' Best Kept Secret

A soup consumed primarily in New Orleans' black neighborhoods may well be this city's best-kept secret for hangover prevention and treatment. Spellings for Ya Ka Mein are as numerous as recipes for gumbo. Gene Bourg spells it yat gaw mein. It is ya cha mein at a place on Felicity Street. It was spelled yat-ka-mein when sold by the Dejoie family restaurant on Danneel Street.

"No, I don't have a recipe for Ya Ka Mein, honey. It is not Creole – it's Chinese. I know a customer has a hangover when someone comes in asking for it. It is sold only in the black community usually from small Chinese takeouts in the neighborhoods," said Leah Chase of Dooky Chase Restaurant on Orleans Avenue several years ago.

For a takeout container, drive around a predominately black New Orleans neighborhood looking for availability signs outside corner stores. A person known as Miss Linda, the Ya Ka Mein Lady, has surfaced as the soup's local patron saintress, neworleanssoulfood.com.