

A close-up view of a stone fireplace. The fireplace is built with large, irregular, light-colored stones. Inside the fireplace, a fire is burning brightly, with several logs on a metal grate. The fire is the central focus, casting a warm, orange glow. The text "WINTER WARMERS AROUND THE WORLD" is overlaid in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the upper portion of the image.

# WINTER WARMERS AROUND THE WORLD

As the cold, dark nights make summer seem but a distant memory, join us for a tour around the world to discover different ways to stay warm and toasty this season

Words by Nancy Groves



**W**inter is the time for comfort, for good food and warmth, for the touch of a friendly hand and for a talk beside the fire: it is the time for home.' So wrote the English writer Edith Sitwell. And she's right. When the nights draw in and the temperatures drop, our thoughts turn naturally to home, hibernation and preparing ourselves for the long winter months ahead.

How we choose to keep warm, however, depends greatly on where in the world we live. While Eskimos build igloos to insulate their families, the Berbers of Saharan Africa put up tents against the desert chill. Peruvians wear tasselled Alpaca beanie hats to keep out the cold while the Russians don fur ushankas. And don't even try to give a Scotsman an Irish coffee to warm his cockles. He'd much prefer a Hot Toddy, made with premium Scotch whisky of course.

Take our tour to discover some more winter warmers from around the globe. And as the Eskimo proverb puts it: 'May you have warmth in your igloo, oil in your lamp, and peace in your heart.'



### SOUP OF THE DAY

Winter doesn't get much colder than in the wilds of Siberia, so it's no surprise that a big bowl of nourishing soup is something of a national dish. Russia boasts more than Heinz's 57 varieties, but none simpler and more delicious than Ukha, a fish soup made from fresh-water species like bass and flounder.

The babushka (or grandmother of the house) cuts up the day's catch into bite-sized chunks and boils them in a big kettle of water. She then adds one onion, two potatoes, a generous dollop of butter and parsley and bay leaves for flavour, before seasoning and simmering for an hour and serving with big husks of brown bread.

Sometimes the fishermen are too ravenous to wait until home time, so they boil up the fish there and then on a campfire by the river, using vodka as anti-freeze.

### TIME FOR TWEED

Tartan may be the national cloth of Scotland, but it's tweed that Scots traditionally turn to during a long, bitter winter. The highlands and islands of northern Scotland have been producing the stuff for centuries.

Luxury Harris Tweed even has its own act of parliament to ensure that all cloth certified with the Harris Tweed logo has been handwoven by the islanders of Lewis, Harris, Uist and Barra using pure virgin wool dyed and spun in the Outer Hebrides. The real deal is recognisable by subtle flecks of rusty orange, caused by vegetable dyes such as lichen 'crottle', which also gives older tweed its distinctive musty smell.

Tweed fell out of fashion favour in the mid 20th century thanks to its hunting, shooting and fishing image. However, recent years

have seen a revival. Nike famously

used Harris Tweed on its 2004

Air Force One trainer, while

guitar-maker Fender added a

touch to its retro amplifier,

the Fender Tweed. And cult

fashion designer Vivienne

Westwood is such a

fan that her label's

logo is almost

identical to the

famous orb of

Harris Tweed. ►





Clockwise from below: Lebkuchen biscuits, Glühwein, Ugg Boots



### MULLING IT OVER

A steaming mug of mulled wine is a renowned winter warmer in northern Europe, and no one does it better than the Germans. A visit to one of Bavaria's famous markets would not be the same without a swig of Glühwein, which literally translated means 'glowing wine'.

Germans say it's the contrast between the cold, snowy weather and the hot, red wine – sweet but spicy enough to revive you at the end of a hard day's work. Using inexpensive red wine as a base, the perfect Glühwein mix should contain cloves, cinnamon, orange and lemon slices, sugar and a slug of warming brandy. Add other spices, such as cardamom and ginger, according to taste and leave to simmer on a low heat, before draining and drinking in small mugs, huddling together for warmth.

A slice of gingerbread Lebkuchen makes for a good accompaniment. And when should it be drunk? As one Munich local puts it: 'When the weather is cold. Minus temperatures or freezing is good. If it's too warm then you want to swap your hot Glühwein for a cold drink instead!'

### A SHEEPISH LOOK

The ubiquitous Ugg Boot burst onto the fashion scene in the winter of 2003. Not since the advent of the humble Wellington had there been such a footwear furore, with everyone from British tabloid queen Katie Price to queen-in-waiting Kate Middleton sporting a pair. Not to mention actress Sienna Miller, who became almost synonymous with the brand.

Uggs had actually been around since the early 1970s in Australia, where the name was first trademarked for the classic sheepskin boot. And it was young Aussie surfer Brian Smith who first took a rucksack of them to California, thus launching a global trend.

Here's the science part: real Ugg Boots are made from Grade A twin-face sheepskin, treated on both the fleece and skin side. Turned inside out, sheepskin's insulating properties give Uggs a natural thermostat, keeping the feet at body temperature whatever the weather. Bonza!

Opinion is still divided on their aesthetic qualities – the name Ugg is derived from the word 'ugly' after all. But boy, are they comfortable. Genuine UGG Australia boots will set you back up to £200 but you can pick up a copycat pair on the high street for as little as £6. Just don't cry if they let the rain in! |

