

## last sip

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Resobox co-owner Takashi Ikezawa with a mug of Aztec chili hot chocolate

# Cross-Cultural Cocoa

## SPICY HOT CHOCOLATE GETS A JAPANESE SPIN

**LUCKY ARE** the residents of 41st Avenue Condos, who merely have to head downstairs to find sanctuary from wind-battered weather in Resobox. At this cozy art gallery and café, locals can scope out one of the ever-changing exhibitions of compelling Japanese artwork while settling in with a book and luscious cup of Aztec chili hot chocolate.

The Mexican and Central American-inspired beverage (co-owner Takashi Ikezawa, long impressed by Mayan and Aztec cultures, has visited Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Mexico) may seem an unlikely drink to follow up a bento box lunch, yet for

Ikezawa it's a natural addition to the menu.

"Japanese people appreciate and feel an intimacy for things that have a long history," he says. "They absorb those cultures, extract the essences and remake them as they like."

At Resobox, they prefer their cayenne-pepper-spiked hot chocolate made with soy milk (some "might think soy milk is not tasty, but we'd like to change their minds," says Ikezawa) and laced with earthy cloves and coffee. Ikezawa won't divulge a few of the hot chocolate's ingredients, but if you're too cold for an outing to Long Island City, try this adapted recipe at home. ☺

### AZTEC CHILI HOT CHOCOLATE

MAKES 1 CUP

1¼ cups soy milk  
Cayenne pepper,  
to taste  
Dash of cloves  
2 tablespoons  
organic cocoa  
powder  
¾ tablespoon  
maple syrup  
Dash of coffee  
(Resobox uses  
its own Japanese  
Nel Drip)

**In a small** saucepan over low heat, bring soy milk to a low simmer, whisking constantly. Whisk in pepper and cloves and turn off heat. Steep 10 minutes. Whisk in cocoa, maple syrup and coffee. Bring to a simmer over low heat, whisking constantly, until frothy and heated through.

## WHERE TO GO

**Resobox**  
41-26 27th St.  
Long Island City  
718-784-3680  
7, N to Queensboro Plaza