

April is National Afternoon Tea Month

"Tea. Earl Grey, hot."

- Capt. Jean-Luc Picard, USS Enterprise

"A woman is like a tea bag. You can't tell how strong she is until you put her in hot water."

- Eleanor Roosevelt

Drinking tea, particularly green tea, is linked to better heart health, improved metabolism, and lower risks of chronic diseases like diabetes and cancer. It may also help protect the brain and preserve muscle strength as we age.

However, processed teas—such as bottled and bubble varieties—often contain sugars and additives that may cancel out these benefits. For the purposes of this newsletter we're sticking to "classic" hot tea.

Tea Started As Medicine

The earliest mentions of tea point to origins as a medicinal drink in southwest China, Tibet, northern Myanmar (Burma), and northeast India, with tea being drunk by Han dynasty emperors as far back as the 2nd century BC. Tea was introduced to Japan in the 6th century AD, finally reaching Europe by the early 17th century. From there it crossed the Atlantic to the British colonies in America. Tea consumption sharply dropped in America during the Revolution (you may recall a certain tea party in Boston), but has thrived more recently, and with good reason.

How To Make Tea

Boil the water? Don't boil? Boil it but let it cool down a little? Use a teapot or a mug? Loose leaf or tea bags? There are as many ways to make tea as there are types of tea, so we're keeping it simple: black or herbal tea, in a teabag, in a mug. These are the two types of tea that are easiest to brew well.

Boil the water in a kettle on the stove or in an electric kettle. You can remove the kettle when you start hearing whistling.

Pour the water over the teabag in the mug, stirring for a few seconds.

Let the tea sit (steep) for 3-5 minutes, or go by the instructions on the box of tea.

Give the teabag a gentle squeeze against the side of the mug before removing it. Over-squeezing the teabag could lead to bitterness.

Add lemon, honey, milk or cream, maybe a tiny bit of sugar - or nothing at all. Note: adding both citrus (like lemon) and dairy to the same mug of tea will likely cause the dairy to curdle. It's not unhealthy tea, but it's generally not considered drinkable that way.

Uses For Tea Besides Drinking

You can cook or bake with tea in meat, fish, pasta, soups, desserts, and salads, instead of just pairing it with foods. Tea can also be used in baked goods, broths, marinades, and spices. On the back page we've shared just one such recipe.

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Creamy Green Tea Soup with Spinach and Chicken

Ingredients

4 ½ Cups, Hot Brewed Green Tea
2 Garlic Cloves, Crushed
1 lb. Chicken Breast, Sliced Thin
5 oz. Baby Spinach, Extra for Garnish
3 Tablespoons Butter
6 oz. Flour
1 Cup Warm Milk
1 Cup Warm Cream
Pecorino Shavings, To Serve

Directions

Bring the tea and garlic to boil on medium high. Season. Add the chicken, cover, and poach (just below simmer) for approximately 20 minutes until chicken is cooked. Take the chicken out, shred and set aside.

Stir the spinach through the hot tea until wilted, then puree/chop the mixture in a blender or food processor until smooth.

Heat the butter on medium until melted, then add the flour, whisking constantly for a minute. Slowly add the milk, cream and half of the spinach-tea poaching liquid while stirring and bring to boil. Add the chicken and heat through.

Thin out with the remaining poaching liquid to your liking. Season.

Serve with extra spinach and Pecorino shavings on top.

Serves approximately 6