

Tea-sing Your Taste Buds: How to Find and Drink a Proper Cup of Tea

How can I find, prepare, and drink a proper cup of tea?

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CONTENTS

WHAT IS TEA?

DISTANT ORIGINS

HOW DID TEA SPREAD?

China

Japan

Europe

The New World

New Inventions

WHAT ARE THE TYPES OF TEA?

Black Tea

Green Tea

Oolong Tea

White Tea

Pu-Erh Tea

Flavored Tea

Herbal "Tea"

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

HOW SHOULD I STORE THE TEA?

WHAT ARE TEA ACCESSORIES?

A Kettle

A Teapot

Cups

Boats and Pans

Tea Cozy

HOW SHOULD I PREPARE THE TEA?

Heat the Water

Preheat the Teapot and Cups

Check the Water Temperature

Measure the Tea

Pour the Water

Time the Brewing

Smell the Tea

Drink Heartily

WHAT ARE THE HEALTH BENEFITS?

Healthy Compounds

Healthy Results

RESOURCES ON THE INTERNET

RESOURCES IN THE LIBRARY

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

"... a perfect combination of these five – setting, company, tea, water, and tea-things – will fail to work its magic in the absence of the special attitude required to do them justice."

-John Blofeld, THE CHINESE ART OF TEA

WHAT IS TEA?

Like fine wine, tea is more than a drink. For some people it's an art form; for others it's a way of life. According to the Tea Council of the USA, it's the second most consumed beverage in the world (after water). And while the US purports to be a nation of coffee drinkers, the Council estimates that on any given day nearly 127 million Americans (about half the people in this country) drink some variety of tea, producing sales that surpass the \$1 billion level. Properly brewed and appreciated, tea can form the basis of social interactions, provide pleasure, and improve both physical and mental health.

All true tea, regardless of variety, derives from the *Camilla sinensis* plant, a white-flowered evergreen. Originally a wild tree, the domesticated plant is pruned and maintained at a height of five feet. After three to five years of initial growth, both the leaves and the buds (new and not-fully-opened leaves) may be harvested and processed into a drinkable form.

Similar to wines, teas are usually named for their region of origin; however, it is not the plant itself but the method of production that determines which of the approximately 3,000 possible types of tea results. Tea is grown wherever soil and moisture conditions permit year-round cultivation, most commonly in China, India, Formosa, and Kenya. Teas from each region have distinctive characteristics; for example, Indian teas tend to be more astringent, while Chinese teas tend to produce a mellower brew. Although not native to the United States, there is one company – American Classic Tea located in North Carolina – that grows and processes its own tea plants.

DISTANT ORIGINS

The birth of tea as a drink dates back so far that the exact details are now more a part of folklore than rooted in fact. To complicate matters further, tea is indigenous to both China and India, and each culture has staked its own claim to inventing the beverage.

According to Chinese legend, about 2,000 years ago Emperor Shen Nong, a man known for his knowledge of agriculture and medicine, decreed that his subjects boil their water before drinking it. This was presumably for health reasons. While drinking hot water in his garden one day, a light wind blew several *Camilla* leaves into his boiling cup, producing an enticing aroma. The emperor tasted the brew and found that not only did he enjoy the flavor, but he also felt refreshed. Tea drinking became the custom from that point forward.

In the Buddhist version, the origin of tea follows the mythical religious pilgrimage of Prince Siddharta Gautama. Siddharta, eager to prove his faith, journeyed to China but pledged to abstain from sleep during the trip. Tired after many days of travel, he broke his vow. When he awoke and realized what had happened, he cursed his eyelids and promptly removed them, throwing them to the ground. Within moments the eyelids disappeared into the soil and sprouted a tea bush. Siddharta ingested the leaves, and immediately his tired body filled with energy.

HOW DID TEA SPREAD?

Regardless of which version you believe (if either), there is no disputing that once the custom began, tea drinking spread rapidly across the globe.

China

The first documented reference to tea as a deliberately-made and consumed beverage appeared in 350 A.D. when the Chinese writer Kuo P'o updated an old dictionary to include the description of tea as "a beverage made from boiled leaves." During this time people steeped the tea leaves in water with ginger, orange, or other produce, using it mostly to treat digestive and nervous conditions. However, in the interior regions of China, people also pressed tea into brick "currency" to barter with other tribes.

Tea became so popular that from 350 to 600 A.D. the demand greatly exceeded the supply of wild plants. As a result, farmers in the Szechwan district began to cultivate their own, and the practice soon spread throughout the country.

Japan

At about this time Japan was actively exploring the cultural wealth of China, which was producing major achievements in areas as diverse as technology, philosophy, and the arts. The dominant Chinese religion was Buddhism, and Buddhist monasteries were centers of aesthetic and spiritual enlightenment.

Buddhism had already made its way to Japan by way of Korea in the middle of the sixth century, and Japanese monks regularly went to China to study. Tea was widely used by Chinese Buddhist monks as an aid to meditation, and the Japanese monks brought it back to their country, where it became a part of Japanese culture. By the late eighth century Lu Yu completed his scholarly work *Ch'a Ching* (THE CLASSIC OF TEA – see the Resources section below). It codified the manufacture, preparation, and drinking of tea, and it became a standard text of Buddhist study in both China and Japan for hundreds of years.

A new type of tea ceremony, called the *Cha-no-yu*, began to develop by the 15th century; this form would become a permanent part of Japanese tradition, lasting even through today. No longer a complement to Buddhist meditation, the ceremony was considered a form of meditation in its own right, and the precisely codified exchange between a host and his guests was thought to evoke a degree of both social and spiritual perfection. Interestingly enough, the actual tea plays a relatively minor role. The preparation for the ceremony, the ambiance and surroundings of the tea room, and the attitude of the host and guests are all of paramount importance.

Europe

In 1600, Queen Elizabeth I of England, longing for exotic luxuries, founded the East India Company to procure riches from the Far East. At first the company's tea shipments were small and subject to high tariffs; as a result, the drink was reserved for high society. However, a number of "enterprising" merchants (read: pirates) ignored the imposed monopoly and illegally imported the leaves. These contraband shipments served not only to increase the supply of tea on mainland England, but they also stimulated its allure by offering this "forbidden fruit" at a lower price. By the middle of the 18th century tea had replaced ale as England's national drink.

During this same period, Dutch trading companies purchased tea in Japan (only the Dutch and the Chinese were allowed access to Japanese ports until 1859) and began importing varieties from Sumatra and Java into Holland, at the same time sending small amounts to Britain and France. An amusing side-note to these events is that in mid-17th century England tea was scorned by the Puritans, so the traders labeled it as "medicinal" to promote its trade and consumption. It worked.

Europeans called this new drink "cha," after the Cantonese name "ch'a;" today English speakers use the word "chai" to identify spicy teas of Indian origin. The British adopted the Amoy (southeastern China) term "tay" in the late 17th century, which led to our current word "tea."

The New World

As tea drinking grew in England, so it did in the English colonies. By the turn of the 18th century, tea was publicly available in the New World cities of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, among others. Unfortunately, however, the colonial tea trade was conducted almost exclusively with the Mother country, which placed increasingly higher tariffs on the product as a way to cover the expense of the French and Indian War.

The taxes (as well as dissatisfaction with many other British policies) prompted the colonists to take action. On December 16, 1773, a band of about 60 men disguised as Indians gathered at Griffin's Wharf, boarded several ships, and tossed hundreds of pounds of tea into Boston Harbor. Known as the Boston Tea Party, this event was a major catalyst in the colonists' fight for independence.

New Inventions

Despite the large number of different teas, up to the early 1900s all had been served primarily in one way – leaves steeped in boiling water and served hot.

In 1904, that changed. At the World's Fair in St. Louis, Richard Blechynden, a tea vendor, set up a stall. The temperature, though, was pushing 100 degrees, and the tea was selling poorly. In an attempt to boost sales, Blechynden dropped ice in the beverage. An instant hit, the concept of "iced tea," now a staple in the America South (but interestingly enough almost unheard of in Europe) was born.

Then in 1908 a New York City tea importer named Thomas Sullivan changed the industry again. Trying to save money on the samples he sent to retailers, Sullivan decided to abandon his customary large tins and began sewing small amounts of the tea into silk bags. The retailers erroneously assumed he had designed these self-straining, pre-measured bags to be steeped directly in hot water. Delighted with the new convenience, they began to place orders for the new "tea bag." Today, about 65 percent of all tea served in the United States is brewed in this way.

WHAT ARE THE TYPES OF TEA?

As we've said before, although all true tea comes from the same plant, not all teas are the same. There are six broad categories, each of which is determined by its method of production. They include:

Black Tea

Perhaps the most widely known type (and the most consumed in the United States – a whopping 95 percent), black tea is a fully-fermented (fully-oxidized) tea. In the traditional "Orthodox" method, the plucked leaves and buds are placed on "withering racks," shelves that allow the excess moisture to be removed. Once dry, they are rolled in special machines that release the enzymes and juices, giving the tea its aroma and taste. Next, they are allowed to fully ferment in a room with controlled temperature and humidity, and finally they are completely dried in ovens and readied for shipment.

Recently, some processors have forsaken the traditional method and have moved to machines that chop the leaves finely to speed up the withering and fermenting process. A smaller leaf, though, produces a different quality of tea, and true aficionados often prefer the "bold-leaf" varieties to bring out the full flavor and subtle undertones that characterize each variety.

Some of the more common black teas include the "breakfast" teas (simple teas suitable for drinking early in the day) such as English or Irish Breakfast, as well as Assam and Darjeeling.

Green Tea

Green tea is a non-fermented (or non-oxidized) tea. Immediately after harvesting, the leaves are steamed or otherwise heated to prevent the fermentation process. Then the leaves are rolled, dried, and readied for shipment.

Oolong Tea

Oolong tea is a partially fermented (partially oxidized) tea. The leaves are allowed to begin to wilt, which releases their fermentation enzymes. Processors then interrupt the process by stirring the leaves in heated pans, rolling them, then drying them. How much fermentation is allowed determines the "smokiness" of the oolong and whether it is considered a green oolong (less oxidized, usually about 20 percent) or a black oolong (more oxidized, somewhere between 40 and 70 percent).

Because this process is labor-intensive, oolongs generally cost more than either black or green teas. Many people are familiar with the basic character (if not the quality) of oolong teas since they are commonly served in Chinese restaurants.

White Tea

White tea gets its name from its pale color and delicate taste. After careful plucking, only the topmost buds and leaves are withered for several hours at room temperature. The wilted leaves are then roasted until they lose 93-95 percent of their moisture content.

Pu-Erh Tea

Pu-Erh tea comes from the Yunnan province of China. It is unique in that the leaves are subjected to a true fermentation process, not the oxidization used to produce black and oolong teas. Bacteria may be added to processed green tea leaves, which are then placed in damp caves to age for up to 60 years. As a result of this storage, the leaves take on an earthy, mold-like aroma and flavor and a wonderfully rich red color. Pu-Erh is available either as loose leaves or in pressed "cakes." It's definitely an acquired taste, however,

and many first-time serious tea drinkers may find it too overwhelming to enjoy properly.

Flavored Tea

Flavored tea is simply tea that has an additional flavoring added to it, either natural or in some cases (usually mass-market varieties) artificial. These teas require an additional step once the leaves are sorted and graded. A black or green tea base is dried a second time, and flavoring, fruit, spices, or flowers are added.

There are three major categories:

1. Scented Teas. These are made from a black tea base and appear the same as any other black tea since the flavoring is sprayed on. They can be flavored with just about anything, including essences of apricot, cherry, and vanilla. Many of the mass-market teas fall into this category, as well as one of the most popular and widely known teas, Earl Grey. In this case the tea is scented with the oil of bergamot, a compound derived from an Italian citrus plant.
2. Spiced Teas. These usually contain pieces of spices such as cinnamon, nutmeg, orange, or lemon peel. The Chai teas of India fall into this category.
3. Fermented-Flavored Teas. Some teas, such as Jasmine and Rose Congou, are flavored during the actual fermentation process to develop deeper flavor notes. After the flavoring is added, the tea is cooled and packaged.

One additional note: when choosing a flavored tea, make sure that the tea, not the flavoring, predominates. Buying from a reputable dealer (such as those listed in the Resources section below) will ensure that the tea will be of the highest quality.

Herbal "Tea"

Herbal teas are not true teas, since they are not produced from the *Camilla sinensis* plant. In short, herbal teas can be made from anything – peels, grasses, berries, leaves, flowers, and flavorings from a number of different plants – that is steeped in boiling water. Many "health teas" that purport to have medicinal properties (but which may or may not have evidence to support those claims) fall into this category. The Federal Drug Administration (FDA) requires that any product labeled as herbal tea carry the name of the plant(s) it derives from so consumers will be informed.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

One of the most common misconceptions about tea has to do with its labeling – for example, the term "Orange Pekoe (OP)." Contrary to popular opinion, Orange Pekoe has nothing to do with a particular flavor, specific variety, or quality of tea; in fact, it is nothing more than a designation of leaf size.

During the manufacturing process, tea leaves are crushed, processed, and dried; as a result, the final product consists of leaf particles of varying sizes. Finer particles steep more quickly than larger ones. The tea is sifted into lots of uniform leaf size to ensure all leaves brew in the same way and don't produce a bitter drink. Teas designated OP are comprised of either large leaf particles or whole leaves that will not pass through a sieve of a particular gauge. Broken Orange Pekoe (BOP) designates a grade finer than OP. Grades finer than BOP are called "Fannings (F);" next are Pekoe Fannings (PF) and then "dust," the smallest particles. Dust grade is what is usually used in tea bags.

Early in the growing season the tip leaf, or bud, has a golden color; teas produced at this time have a multicolored appearance and are therefore referred to as Golden Flowery Orange Pekoe (GFOP), and Golden Broken Orange Pekoe (GBOP). The leaves are harvested all through the year, but the early growth often yields superior teas with more concentrated flavor; as a result, the GFOP and GBOP designations are considered more desirable than the BOP and FOP varieties.

But while there is a general correlation between this confusing array of acronyms and the general appearance and character of the tea, the relationship is not hard and fast. The real value of any tea is in its appeal to the palate, so be discriminating. Choose your teas based on what you prefer and not solely on how many letters its designation contains.

HOW SHOULD I STORE THE TEA?

You've invested in a variety of teas, but how do you store your valuable purchases so you can savor them over time? Although the concept may seem a bit strange in this time of mass-market production and indefinite shelf lives, tea will go stale if not stored properly.

Tea is vulnerable to four spoilers: air, light, heat, and moisture. It will lose its aroma – and more importantly its flavor – very quickly in the presence of any of these. The solution is to invest in a good, fully-protective container, one for each variety of tea. Probably the best ones are sturdy ceramic canisters with rubber-trimmed latches. They are airtight and odorless and will last a long time.

The next best solution is a double-lid or pry-top tin. Single-top tins might look pretty, but they don't seal tightly enough to be effective; tea kept in such tins will go stale quickly or, worse, will absorb odors from spices, cooking, and even other teas stored near it. Never keep your tea in a clear glass container, since the light will also degrade the quality of the leaves. Keep all containers in a cool (but not refrigerated), dry place.

Stored properly, your fine black and oolong teas will keep their character for well over a year. Green teas lose quality faster and should be used within six to 12 months after they are produced (with the exception of tightly rolled green teas such as Gunpowder Green).

WHAT ARE TEA ACCESSORIES?

So you've got your tea and stored it properly. However, the purpose of tea is not simply to hoard it away, but to drink and to appreciate it. To that end, you will need to purchase some basic utensils and accessories. These include:

A Kettle

Whistling or non-whistling, any type of kettle will do, as long as it has a capacity at least equal to that of your teapot.

A Teapot

You will need to be a lot more selective about the type of teapot you use, since different materials may influence the characteristics of the tea within. You should be aware, though, that different people have different preferences, much of it rooted in history and custom.

For some time after the initial cultivation of tea, no teapots were used. The tea leaves

were rolled by hand, dried, and then ground into a powder. At first this powder was mixed with salt and formed into cakes that were then dropped into bowls of hot water to form a thick mixture. Eventually the powder was left in its loose form, mixed in a bowl with boiling water, and whipped into a froth. This powdered tea is still used as part of the Japanese Tea Ceremony.

In the mid-1300s, leaf infusion (such as we use today) became popular, and the earliest teapots were constructed to accommodate the change. These pots were fashioned from the purple clay of China's YiXing region and were prized for their fine texture, thin walls, and naturally beautiful coloration. They were, and still are, used both to brew the tea as well as serve as the drinking vessel; you sip directly from the spout of a single-serving pot. YiXing teapots gradually season, as the unglazed clay absorbs the flavor of the brewed tea.

In the early 1700s, King Augustus of Poland, who had a fondness for Chinese pottery, instructed an alchemist named Johann Bottger to come up with a European equivalent to the rich clay found in Chinese porcelain. The Chinese had been firing pieces of hard porcelain as early as 618 A.D., but they defined their porcelain not by color or translucence, but rather by the musical note achieved when a piece was struck. Around 1710, Bottger found the proper balance of materials and formed a compound that was white with a smooth texture and a translucent quality.

This "hard paste" porcelain allowed for innovation in decorative techniques, such as painting the pots with a wider range of colors, gilding, etc. However, the size of the teapots remained very small; like the YiXing pieces, they were approximately five to nine inches tall. Though beautiful and functional, the porcelain was expensive; as a result only the rich could afford these new items.

During the 1700s, teapots were also fashioned out of silver, and the English Queen Anne and Georgian styles replaced earlier, more Gothic and triangular ewer shapes. Silver was durable and fashionable, and gradually whole tea services, including a tray, spoons, creamers, sugar bowls, and storage canisters, were "required" to serve tea properly.

Most teapots come with a custom-made, removable infuser. This is simply a basket that holds the loose tea leaves and permits you to remove them quickly once they are fully steeped. If you purchase a pot that does not have an infuser (or a built-in strainer), you will need to get one. They come in many sizes and materials, but look for one that has a fine yet extensive mesh that will allow the water to reach all the leaves, the leaves to unfurl fully, and that will be relatively easy to clean.

The other alternative is to purchase a sieve spoon. This spoon is placed over the drinking cup, and the tea from the teapot is poured over it. The spoon allows the tea to flow through into the cup below but traps the leaves in its mesh.

One additional point you may want to consider when you buy your teapot is that porcelain and earthenware tend to hold heat better than metal or china. The first two materials may be preferable if you don't serve your tea immediately after brewing.

Cups

You will also need to have cups to drink from. Many teapots are sold in sets that come with infusers, spoons, and cups. If not, choose a cup that has a relatively narrow mouth (so it doesn't lose heat too quickly) and is made from a material that holds its heat well.

Boats and Pans

These items are not essential, but they are wonderful additions to creating the proper ambiance for serving tea. Pans are used to hold the tea service, while boats serve as dishes to catch the decanted water and first brew (see the preparation instructions below).

Tea Cozy

A tea cozy is essentially a padded mitt or "sweater" for your teapot. It fits over the pot and serves to keep the contents warm. Again, this is not an essential item, but it is one that can prove very handy, especially if you are not serving the entire contents of the teapot immediately. Whatever type or decoration you choose for your cozy, make sure it fits over the entire pot.

HOW DO I PREPARE MY TEA?

Contrary to popular opinion, you should not brew all teas in the same way or for the same amount of time. Proper brewing is just as essential to creating the proper cup of tea as selecting a quality leaf. Use the following guidelines to begin the process; as you become more experienced, feel free to adjust these guidelines to meet your particular needs and taste:

Heat the Water

Put the kettle on shortly before you intend to brew your tea. Do not keep the water boiling all day long; as strange as it may sound, it will go "flat" and spoil the flavor. For best results, use filtered or bottled water to produce a "clean" taste that won't alter the quality of the tea.

Preheat the Teapot and Cups

Fill the pot and cups with boiling water, then immediately decant it into a tea boat or the sink. A preheated pot allows the leaves to steep at the proper temperature and will produce a better brew; preheated cups allow the tea to stay warm longer once it's poured.

Check the Water Temperature

Not all teas brew best at the same temperature. For black teas use boiling water - 212 degrees. For oolongs use water at 180 to 195 degrees, and for green and white teas use water at 160 to 180 degrees.

If you use boiling water for green and white teas, you may be displeased with the taste; the heat tends to pull out the bitter elements in the leaves and produces an unpalatable brew. A candy thermometer may be handy until you learn to approximate the temperature of the water. If the tea brews up too strong, you can decant the first brew into a boat or the sink and then re-steep the leaves with additional water.

Measure the Tea

The amount of tea you use will vary, depending on the size of the pot and the type and quality of the tea. The general rule for a pot of tea is one teaspoon for each person who

will be drinking and one additional teaspoon "for the pot." If you use a small-leaf tea, you will probably need less, since the increased surface area will allow for a stronger brew; if you use a bold-leaf tea, you will probably need a bit more.

Pour the Water

Always pour the water over the tea. If you add the leaves after the water, they will not brew properly, and you will end up with a weak and somewhat "flat" taste.

Time the Brewing

Just as with water temperature, brewing time varies according to tea type. Usually the smaller the leaf, the shorter the brewing time. The general rule for a full pot of tea is three to four minutes for blacks; four to five minutes for greens; five to seven minutes for oolongs; and five minutes for whites. If you are new to the brewing process, err on the side of caution. Start tasting the tea at about one minute and every 30 seconds after that to ensure that the taste is to your liking.

Black teas should only be steeped once and then discarded. Green and oolong teas can often be used for multiple infusions, but you will have to lengthen the brewing the second time since a large percentage of the flavor compounds will have gone into the first pot.

Smell the Tea

One of the magnificent qualities of tea is its aroma. Just as you would do with a fine wine, waft some of the steam into your nostrils and inhale deeply. Savor the experience.

Drink Heartily

The whole purpose of brewing tea is to enjoy it, in as many ways as possible. Find yourself a comfortable chair, make scones, curl up with a book, or do whatever else suits your fancy. When you first try a new tea, sip it slowly, rolling it around in your mouth to experience the "body" and the taste. Drink as much as you like, and do it often. And feel free to share the process with anybody and everybody who might appreciate the experience, as well.

WHAT ARE THE HEALTH BENEFITS?

Healthy Compounds

Although most people drink tea for its taste, recent evidence (as well as ancient folklore) suggests that it has numerous health benefits that result primarily from two types of compounds found in the leaves:

- Polyphenols. Found in both green and black teas, these compounds are powerful antioxidants. Antioxidants counteract free radicals (highly reactive molecules) in the body that are thought to contribute to cancer and other diseases.
- Vitamins and other nutrients. Green tea contains a surprisingly high amount of Vitamin C – two small cups have about as much as a large glass of orange juice. Tea is also a good source of manganese, potassium, niacin, and folic acid, as well as trace amounts of Vitamins B1, B2, and K.

Healthy Results

As a result of these compounds, tea plays a major role in promoting and preserving health in a number of ways. These include:

- **Cancer prevention.** Laboratory studies have shown that the antioxidant properties of tea have an effect against cancer by inhibiting formation of cancer-causing substances. Green tea is particularly effective against esophageal cancer, while black tea has been shown to work against stomach cancer.

In tests using bacteria, white teas were generally more effective even than green teas in preventing mutagenicity (problems resulting from unrepaired or mis-repaired damage to the genetic code, and an early step in the process leading to cancer).

- **Immune system enhancement.** Polyphenols increase the number of white blood cells, which are responsible for fighting infections. In addition, the high Vitamin C content helps to prevent and to fight some viruses, such as the common cold.

- **Cardiovascular benefits.** Research suggests that a diet rich in antioxidants can help to prevent both heart disease and stroke. These compounds also stimulate the circulatory system, strengthen blood vessels, and decrease cholesterol in the bloodstream.

- **Digestive benefits.** Both essential oils (the compounds that give tea its aroma and taste) and polyphenols aid digestion by increasing the flow of digestive juices. Evidence also indicates that drinking tea during or after a high-cholesterol meal can lower the fat level in the blood.

- **Weight reduction.** Some evidence suggests that certain teas, such as Pu-Erh, can help reduce body weight by affecting the level of fat in the bloodstream and in the tissues.

- **Tooth and bone enhancement.** Tea is also rich in fluoride, a mineral that strengthens both tooth enamel and bones, thereby reducing cavities and helping to prevent osteoporosis. In addition, polyphenols can reduce the level of bacteria in the mouth, which may lessen plaque formation.

- **Antibacterial effects.** Some studies indicate that tea acts as a mild germicide. In the digestive tract, it helps fight food poisoning and diseases like cholera, typhoid, and dysentery. It can also help prevent certain types of throat infections. In China, green tea is often used as a home remedy to disinfect cuts and abrasions and to cure or prevent skin disease and athlete's foot. In the United States, many people use wet tea bags to help staunch bleeding, such as on the gums after a dental procedure.

- **Mental stimulation.** Tests have shown that drinking tea helps improve concentration, alertness, and problem-solving ability.

- **Lifespan extension.** While tea by itself will not lengthen a person's life, its many benefits taken together can help promote greater physical and mental health. Currently researchers are investigating the extent of these effects by studying longevity in different tea drinking cultures.

Many people worry about the effects of caffeine; however, all tea has less caffeine per cup than coffee. Black teas have the highest content, followed by oolongs, then greens and whites. If caffeine is a concern, try steeping the pot for a short time then pouring off the first infusion, just as you would do if the tea were too strong. This will rinse away a significant portion of the caffeine content. Then simply add more water to the leaves and

steep for the appropriate amount of time for its type.

More than just a drink, tea engages all the senses and stimulates the body and the mind. No matter which variety you choose or why you are drinking it, savor the experience. Enjoy the aroma and color of the brew, the shape of the infused leaves, and the warmth of the cup in your hand. After all, as Lewis Carroll observed in ALICE IN WONDERLAND, "... it's always tea time ..."

RESOURCES ON THE INTERNET

(Please note: All links were working at the time of publication. With the ever-changing environment of the Internet, however, some pages may not be accessible at a later time.)

Bigelow Tea Web site

You can order tea, find information and articles about tea, and a dictionary of tea terms

<http://www.bigelowtea.com>

Harney & Sons Tea

A fine tea importer

<http://www.harney.com>

The Tea Association of the United States of America

Industry association with extensive information

<http://www.teausa.com>

The Tea Council of the UK

UK industry association with link to teahealth.co.uk, which claims to be "the world's largest resource of tea and health related information"

<http://www.tea.co.uk>

The Ten Ren Tea Ginseng Company

The largest and best known tea manufacturer in the Far East

<http://www.tenren.com>

Upton Tea Imports

A fine tea importer. Order tea, view articles about the history and preparation of tea, or look up terms in their dictionary

<http://www.uptontea.com>

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Miriam Ruff is a freelance writer and editor with a degree in Zoology and nearly 30 years' experience writing on a wide variety of topics, including health, the biological and physical sciences, and education. Her nonfiction work has appeared in scientific journals, newspapers and books; in addition, she has written and produced several audio dramas and short films, and has published three volumes of poetry and a number of short stories. More important to this e-book, though, she is a serious "tea-aholic," with over sixty varieties at home and more on the way. Yet given the pleasure and the benefits associated with tea, she has firmly resolved never to go through a twelve-step program to cure this wonderful addiction.