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The **TEA** House TimesTM



TheTeaHouseTimes.com

| July/August 2020



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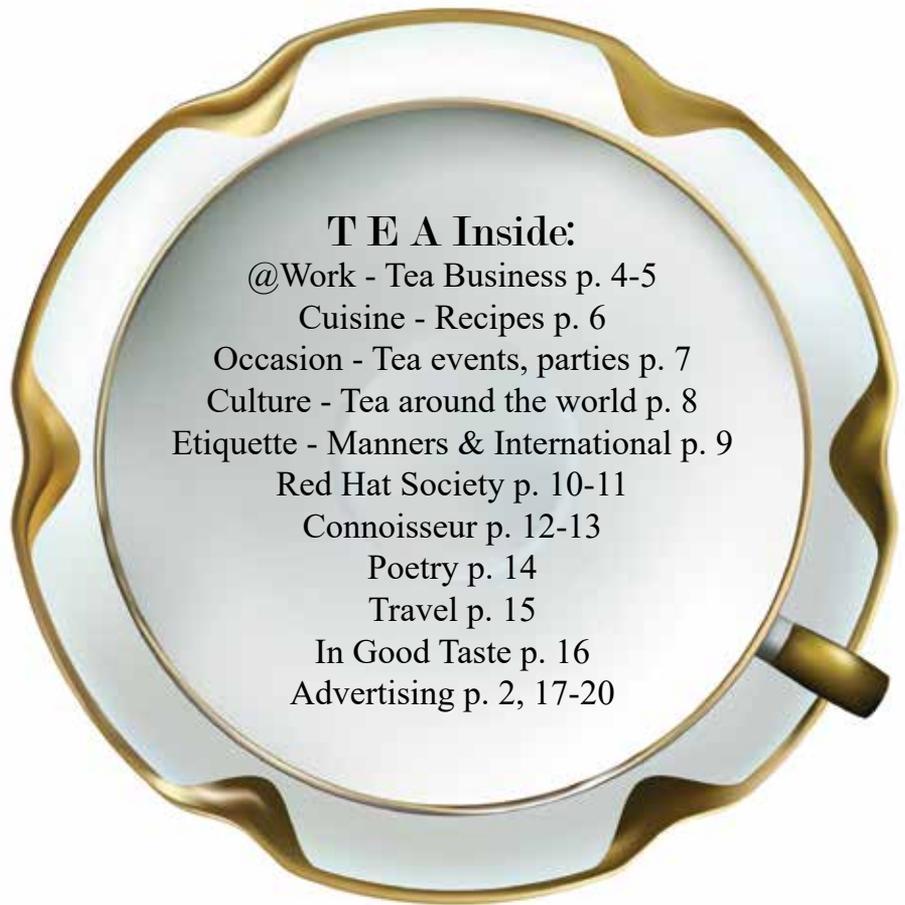


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Greetings from The TEA House Times!

How are you? Truly, I would like to know.

It seems forever since we have been able to meet our friends in person for a relaxing tea time, group tea party, or large gathering at a trade show. It is my hope that your personal tea break is holding you over and providing a way to relax each and every day while we are all missing one another.

Even if you are quite weary from one too many virtual tasks necessary for yourself, your children, your family, or business, tea continues to be that one thing we can depend on and turn to for respite.

In light of the current vibe all around, I am proud to say that every person that I know in the tea community worldwide embraces every ethnicity and accepts everyone equally. Especially when recognizing how tea is also connecting all people around the world through growing, plucking, processing, consuming and various unique customs. Tea is a common thread enjoyed by every nationality.

Let's think about how tea compares to the situation at hand...

SALUTATIONS

TEA: Yellow, White, Green, Blue, Red, or Black = *Camellia sinensis*

PEOPLE: Every color = The Human Race

ALL OF THE ABOVE: Made differently, but same species. Not treated the same, yet they are.

LIFE IS LIKE A CUP OF TEA,
IT'S ALL IN HOW Y-O-U MAKE IT.

Set a good example and make it better!

Hoping to see you all soon at the next possible tea gathering.



All the best,

*Gail
Gastelu*

@WORK

A message from . . .



Founded in 1899, the Tea Association of the USA, Inc. was formed to promote and protect the interests of the tea trade in the United States and is the recognized independent authority on Tea.

First International Tea Day sees call for joint action to ensure sustainability of tea sector.

FAO marked International Tea Day, May 21st, by stressing the crucial need to ensure the sustainability of tea production - a basis for the livelihoods of millions of farmers - especially at a time when the world economy enters a recession and incomes decline as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the current pandemic, the first observance of International Tea Day was held virtually.

“Tea, as a source of employment and revenue, can help alleviate some of the hardships resulting from the current economic downturn”, said FAO Director-General QU Dongyu in his opening remarks at the ceremony.

Highlighting its vital contribution to fighting hunger, reducing extreme poverty, empowering women, while safeguarding ecosystems and bio-diversity, Qu encouraged all stakeholders to forge partnerships and concrete projects to further sustainably develop the tea sector. To build a more productive and resilient tea sector, the FAO chief stressed the need for better policies, more innovation, increased investments and greater inclusiveness in tea production and processing.

Link to FAO webcast: <http://www.fao.org/webcast/home/en/item/5271/icode/>

All tweets can be found here. #InternationalTeaDay and #TeaDay

For more information please contact:
International-Tea-Day@fao.org

I want to thank FAO for providing this information and for their sponsorship and endorsement of International Tea Day!!!!

I hope all readers remain safe and well!!!!



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Peter F. Goggi".

Peter F. Goggi, President
Tea Association of
the U.S.A., Inc.
TeaUSA.org

Use the #DrinkTea Campaign



DrinkTeaCampaign.com



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A message from . . .



The importance of friends and family has never been more apparent than this year, when we have relied on virtual connections to keep us together. Reflecting on International Tea Day, which took place on 21 May, I keep coming back to the thought that tea also brings people together. On that day the global tea family came together to celebrate our wonderful beverage and we raised our cups in thanks to all those that bring us tea; from the growers and the pickers, to the packers and the factory workers (see tinyurl.com/teathanks).

We drink tea because we love its flavours, but also for comfort and the act of sharing a pot of tea brings us joy. Consumers tell us they find drinking tea to be calming, making them feel less stressed or anxious. In times when supporting mental health and wellbeing is a priority, tea has an important role to play. Tea is there for us in times of trouble and grief, where we support one another and offer ‘tea and sympathy’, but it is also at the heart of many a celebration; it is called a ‘tea-party’ after all, and 21 May 2020 will be remembered as one of the biggest global tea parties to date!

30 July is the United Nations International Day of Friendship. A day to promote the human solidarity, that was so evident on International Tea Day. The UN suggest that through friendships and developing strong ties of trust, we can contribute to the fundamental shifts that are urgently needed to achieve lasting stability, weave a safety net that will protect us all, and strive for a better world, where all are united for the greater good. Let’s continue to use tea as a means to forge human connections, by talking and listening over a comforting cuppa.



Sharon Hall
Chief Executive
UK Tea & Infusions
Tea.co.uk

A message from . . .



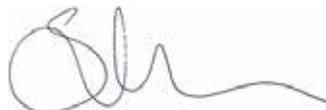
The Bond of Tea

On May 21st, we celebrated for the first time collectively, International Tea Day – and what a celebration it was. With the inability to physically gather, we were all forced to dig deep and become creative.

And dig deep we did! We made videos RAISING OUR CUPS – first to all the tea drinkers – and then to all the hands that make our tea possible. It was a day of thanks and it was a day of recognition. And then we thought, MORE! An idea that hatched on a Tuesday afternoon, was named the SofaSummit and was fully in place by Wednesday morning. This was only possible because of this special world we operate in called tea.

The prospect of being live online for 11 hours was, a lot. But the reality of it on May 21st, was anything but that. Sharing this day traveling from my living room across 14 time zones was extraordinary. First, for the knowledge, the wisdom, the experience and insight each and every one of my guests had to offer. And second, for the commitment so many of you showed in staying with me....throughout the entire day!

What was unexpected for me, was the unscripted string of continuity that extended from person to person; everyone’s deep connection, love and commitment to this industry. For every single person I spoke to, tea had grabbed who they were and become a part of them, each unable to let go of the other; not wanting to let go of the other. And perhaps it shouldn’t have come as a surprise, because in this time of social distancing, separation and isolation, what else could have brought us all together in a day of joy and hope...than the bond of tea.



Shabnam Weber
President
Tea and Herbal
Association of Canada
Tea.ca



Tea on the Porch

Hot summer days call for pitchers of iced tea. So easy to keep hydrated with these two refreshing teas ready on your summer tea table. Strawberry Fields from The Tea Spot (TheTeaSpot.com) and Green Tea with Mint from Bigelow (in grocery stores or on-line BigelowTea.com). For a delicious variation on iced Green Tea with Mint, freeze cubes of watermelon and use as “ice.” Made in a flash, this sparkling pink, chilled soup is perfect for a hot summer day. Elevate your presentation by serving in a vintage champagne glass or maintain the cottage charm by using a tea cup as a bowl.

Strawberry Champagne Soup

5 cups strawberries (about 2 lbs.), cleaned & halved
 ¼ cup sugar
 ½ cup strong fruit herbal tea, cooled
 (I used The Tea Spot’s Strawberry Fields)
 Squeeze of lemon
 1 cup champagne
 Mint leaves for garnish

Combine strawberries, sugar, herbal tea and lemon juice in food processor. Pulse until smooth. Chill. When ready to serve, stir in champagne and ladle into vintage champagne glasses or teacups. Garnish center with sprig of mint.

English Summer Pudding

Making an impressive presentation, this traditional British dessert dates back to the late Victorian Era. Simple, light & refreshing.

3 lbs. mixed fresh berries
 (blackberry, blueberry, raspberries, strawberries)
 1 cup sugar
 1 loaf firm, white bread
 Prepared whipped cream
 1 deep 2-quart bowl

Place berries in bowl and stir in sugar. Let sit for 6-8 hours to draw the juices out. For quicker results, simmer sugared berries

by Karen Donnelly

gently. Line the bowl with plastic wrap by drawing a sheet across in 2 directions and smooth out. Trim bread slices of crust. Place first slice on the bottom of the bowl after first dipping into the fruit juices. Cut the remaining slices in wedge shapes. Dip each in the juice and place around the sides of the bowl, pushing pieces together, so that there are no spaces. The result should be a “bowl” of bread. Add the berries and any remaining juice into the center of the bowl. Finish cutting remaining bread slices to completely cover the top. Place a pie dish on top and add heavy tin cans to help press the pudding together. Chill overnight. Remove tins and pie pan and cover with serving plate. Tip over and carefully remove bowl using plastic wrap to help ease the bowl off. Spoon out portions to serve with a dollop of whipped cream.

Blueberry Scones

There is nothing as flavorful as fresh picked wild blueberries. If available, they will make these scones very special.

2 cups unbleached flour
 1-1/2 Tbsp baking powder
 ½ tsp. baking soda
 1/3 cup sugar
 1 cup fresh blueberries (not frozen)
 Zest of one lemon
 Juice of one lemon added to enough
 buttermilk to make ¾ cup liquid

Mix dry ingredients and lemon zest well and cut in butter until nicely crumbled like bread crumbs. Gently fold in blueberries, keeping them whole as much as possible. Whisk lemon juice and buttermilk together and add to dry ingredients. Lift and fold with your hands until dough comes together well. Do not knead. On a floured surface, either roll out dough about ½” thick, patting into 7-8” circle and cut into 8 wedges. Brush tops with a little buttermilk. Set scones on parchment covered baking sheet and bake for about 15-20 minutes until golden brown on top. Check at 15 minutes and watch to make sure you don’t over bake.

Serve with lemon curd.



Karen Donnelly is a certified Tea Association of Canada Tea Sommelier Professional and has been an afternoon tea event planner, speaker and teacher for over 20 years. She is the owner of Greenhalgh Tea and manager of the Orchard Tea Room at Rose Hip Barn, Thornton, PA. See GreenhalghTea.com

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Be Social with an Ice Cream Social

OCCASION

by Kim Hendrickson

Traditional ice cream social gatherings date back to the 18th century. In 1744, Maryland's governor was the first to serve ice cream at a dinner party. Then a few years later (1802) Thomas Jefferson, after tasting ice cream in France, hosted a party where he served this creamy treat. Remember, only the wealthy had either the staff or the tools to keep ice, so it took years before ice cream became a favorite of everyone.

Once the public demanded more, all sorts of creations were offered. Ever had a Philadelphia? That is because you didn't live in Philadelphia (considered the Capital of Ice Cream because of the volume it manufactured) where the favorite was the much-loved vanilla-egg flavor. Buffalo, NY invented the sundae to circumvent a law preventing people from enjoying an ice cream soda on Sundays.

While the knowledge of ice cream history is not a requirement for enjoying this dessert, it does make giving an ice cream social as your next gathering a bit more cred. Maybe these ice cream party ideas will add some fun to your next party scoop?

- Create a unique center piece: Use a wire cupcake tiered stand, but in place of cupcakes, place waffle cones filled with fluffy multicolored cotton candy (available in grocery store).
- Do an ice cream tasting offering an assortment of vanilla ice cream from local independent creameries.
- Make your own cones for dessert. Use a pizzella maker (or frying pan) to brown the batter, then shape the cones in front of your guests.
- Make your own ice cream while your guests are awaiting (or put them to work cranking if it is an old timey ice cream maker) dessert, then serve it.
- Be sure to have an assortment of mini cupcakes. Who doesn't love ice cream and cake?
- Create a buffet of "sprinkles & topping" for your guests to jazz-up their dessert.
- Create a casual picnic like environment; it is tradition. Checked tablecloths, lots of napkins, wildflowers for the table centerpiece. Keep it simple.
- Fill a flat-bottom cone with candies or mints as a table favor.
- Egg salad sandwiches, maybe turkey/cranberry sandwiches, or hand-held chicken pot pies.
- Serve iced tea... a variety of flavors: lemon flavored black, hibiscus, strawberry mint, etc. but be sure to have a few sodas on hand, just in case someone wants an Ice Cream Soda!
- Game: Pull trivia off the internet to create a guessing game. Did you know that chocolate ice cream was created long before vanilla?
- Prizes of winning the game should be pints of your favorite local ice cream.



"Ice cream is cheaper than therapy."

Unknown

Kim Hendrickson, author of the Tastefully Small cookbook series, has been teaching for over 25 years. A regular instructor in assorted programs in the New York area, JCCFS in North Carolina and The North Folk School in Minnesota and a frequent speaker throughout the US. She has catered for The Travel Channel's Bizarre Food Show, No Taste Like Home in NC, The New York Metropolitan Opera, Penguin Repertory Theatre, and TV's "Slangman" David Burke. Please visit salviapress.net



CULTURE

Tea With the Grands

by Gail Henderson

This has been a trying summer to share tea. My favorite tearoom is not open yet and I cannot take the granddaughters as before, but I discovered that children would take an interest in whatever interests you-- if they have the time. And they might do it without your coaxing or even suggesting. I am talking spontaneous tea parties!

For the first time ever, within two days just this week, both sets of grandkids ages 3 to 12 - including the grandsons who live fifty miles apart- decided it was time to have a tea party, and some even gave real tea a try.

My grands have always been willing to devour sweet tea foods. But unexpectedly in my kitchen the other day, three of them gathered around, asked me to make real tea for them, and then sipped the results! (Of course, I used a glass teapot with strainer so they could watch the brewing process.)

One put 6 teaspoons of sugar in an ounce of tea before giving up, but the other two younger grandchildren drank their tea with very little sugar and then requested we try a different kind! I have been so patiently waiting for the day when I won't have to fill a whimsical teapot with lemonade or apple juice!

If spontaneous interests are happening at your house or in your neighborhood, may I suggest Lydia Harris's book *In the Kitchen with Grandma*. Lydia a.k.a. "Grandma Tea" is a columnist who writes "A Cup of Tea with Lydia" and a cookbook author who has been enjoying tea with grands for many years.



I don't have Lydia's credentials, but I do have a trick or two up my sleeve. I'm going to wow them the next time we are all together with a tea flower which will bloom in my glass tea pot. I may even give my grandson affectionately known as Little Ben the Big Ben teapot we brought back from London-- just to see his face! Have fun with tea this summer. May all your tea times be blessed.



Gail Henderson connects people through her business - Love Your Neighborhood. She lives in Palmetto, Florida. Gail makes memories with her grandchildren and helps others make memories by giving away tea resources and information. Visit her website to learn more: LoveYourNeighborhood.com Or call 813-928-1166 for information and help. Photo credit: Martha DeWeese

Your Manners Matter® Minute with Cynthia Grosso

Understanding the handshake and appreciating its value may help us keep using this global tradition for years to come.



Etiquette Tip: Handshaking, a Thing of the Past?



We are living in unprecedented times of change fueled by a modern world of globalism, communications, and technology. Just a few months ago the economy was strong, unemployment low, and optimism high. Then we experienced a global pandemic that rocked the world.

One thing is certain, no matter what industry you are in, post-pandemic will look different than pre-pandemic. One thing that has gotten a lot of questions is the handshake. Will handshaking be part of the “new normal” or will this gesture of goodwill go by the trail of forgotten traditions?

I have heard people say that we can just fist bump or elbow bump or that we do not need the handshake. If you think that shaking hands is nothing more than a polite gesture, then you might agree.

The handshake, however, is much more than that. Your hand is wired with all the neuroreceptors for your brain. When you shake hands, these receptors send feel good

chemicals to the brain like dopamine and oxytocin. These chemicals help the meeting to start off on a more positive note and are important to help people connect in business and build relationships.

You may think twice about extending your hand during this interlude in time. It is my hope however, that the new norm may be that we all carry hand sanitizer and wash our hands more often. Understanding the handshake and appreciating its value may help us keep using this global tradition for years to come.



Editor's note: Alongside the multi-cultural experience of tea, many tea lovers travel the world - to tea growing countries and to those places where tea is experienced in special ways. Updates to this wonderful feature page for manners, etiquette, and international protocol will help you in every situation around the world. Enjoy!

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charlestonschoolofprotocol.com

Cynthia Grosso is Founder of The Charleston School of Protocol and Etiquette. The Charleston School of Protocol and Etiquette specializes in helping people handle life's events and changes with style, polish and confidence. The Charleston School of Protocol and Etiquette teaches the skill of confidence to eliminate personal and professional barriers and live an extraordinary life.





While the world was ordered to stay inside for a time, many wondered how they were going to keep connected with friends and those they interacted with regularly. Thankfully, RHS members around the globe plugged in online and showed that not even a worldwide pandemic can stop our fun or keep us apart!

During the “stay-at-home” orders, many Hatters got creative with their interactions – taking tea parties online and social distancing when coming together. In fact, to celebrate the Red Hat Society’s 22nd birthday earlier this year, a group of RHS sisters planned a virtual tea party! Members prepared for the party individually in their own homes – making tea and dressing in their RHS regalia and hats! When it came time to party, they gathered on a video conference call, and it was as if they were in the same room together.

Virtually Connected



During the virtual tea, the group played games, learned ways to organize their hat collections, and simply enjoyed being together. It just goes to show that you can’t keep Hatters from having fun!

If you’re looking to join a group of women who love to have fun no matter what their circumstances, join RHS today – visit RedHatSociety.com to get started!



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CONNOISSEUR

James Norwood Pratt



House of Tea



Jessica didn't want me to hear it from anybody else, she said: She was closing up shop. After twenty-eight years Philadelphia was about to lose its House of Tea and she was relocating to Aiken, South Carolina. For a long minute neither of us spoke. I remembered when Nat Litt first opened in 1991 and called to pick my brain. Nat's life had been a non-stop adventure and being a tea merchant would be his last hurrah, he said. He wanted the House of Tea to be his monument. "You've had a good run," I told his daughter and successor. "You've made Nat and Margot really proud." You don't miss your tea blend til your merchant shuts down. Old customers swamped the House of Tea with so many orders Jessica sold out and needed to source nearly two tons of specialty tea to meet demand. "I can't abandon my customers without their favorites--they're friends."

Like her legacy business, Jessica is unique in the American tea scene. Name another tea expert and merchant who has completed over fifty marathon runs around the world. She took up running after retiring from a successful career as one of the first female race horse jockeys, I might add. She expects to love living in the South Carolina horse country, albeit as radical as any transformation in her legendary father's life.

Nat Litt was a Frank Lloyd Wright trained architect who managed construction of the Guggenheim. He next became a Ringling Brothers Circus clown, then switched careers again to win recognition as a Cordon Bleu schooled pastry chef. His devoted wife and companion Margot collected art while Nat baked but the occupational hazards of his calling began to weigh on Nat as his weight ballooned. He was forced to choose between ending his career or ending his life and happily hit upon tea for his "last hurrah." I introduced him to Devan Shah and Nat's personality and genius did the rest.

The House of Tea became a Philadelphia institution which has thrived under Nat's worthy successor Jessica. Along with the likes of Anupa Mueller of Silver Tips Tea Room in Tarrytown, New York, Mim Enck of East Indies Tea & Coffee of Lebanon, Pennsylvania, Caroline Cahan of a Southern Season in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and others, Jessica has long shone as a leading light in the East Coast tea sisterhood. South Carolina should hope she carries on!



*James Norwood Pratt
is acknowledged as America's Tea Sage.
He is an award winning author and authority on tea.*

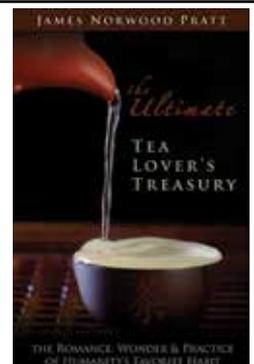
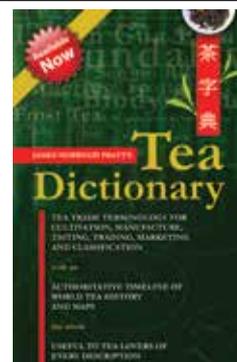
Please visit

JamesNorwoodPratt.com for Norwood's schedule of appearances and to purchase his books.

****Do you have input or a question for Norwood?**

Send your question to info@theteahousetimes.com

*Find more of James Norwood Pratt's work at
TeaCourse.com where learning never ends.*



It's Barbecue Season!

by Linda Villano, SerendipiTea

It's barbecue season! One of the many good things about having a CIA (Culinary Institute of America) trained Chef in the family is that I get to play in the kitchen with Tea then get my brother (the Chef) involved if something seems promising.

Although I can't take much credit for the following BBQ & T Sauce recipe, I do attest to lots of finger dipping (tasting) & enthusiastic nodding (it's yummy).

Enjoy this delicious recipe!

BBQ & T Sauce

*Please prepare using local, organic, and seasonal products when feasible:

Strained Tomatoes - 2 cups

Light Brown Sugar - ¼ cup

Onion, minced - ¼ cup

Garlic, minced - 3 cloves

Olive Oil, extra virgin - 2 Tbsp.

Water (for puree/for tea concentrate) - 2 Tbsp. / ½ cup

Apple Cider Vinegar - 2 Tbsp.

Tomato Paste - 2 Tbsp.

Dijon Mustard - 1 Tbsp.

Hot Sauce - 2 Tbsp.

Chili Powder - 1 tsp.

Salted Butter - 1 tsp.

Worcestershire Sauce - 1 tsp.

SerendipiTea's Faux Cocoa* (concentrate) - 4 Tbsp.

SerendipiTea's Lapsang Souchong* (sachet) - 4 Tbsp.

Sea Salt, ground - to taste

White Pepper, ground - to taste

CONNOISSEUR

Linda Villano



Method:

1. Blend onion, garlic, and 2 tablespoons water into a puree.
2. Make tea concentrate. Boil ½ cup of water, add 4 tablespoons of SerendipiTea's Faux Cocoa. Steep for 4 ½ minutes and strain.
3. In a medium sauce pan, heat olive oil over medium heat. When olive oil is warm, add the onion and garlic puree. Simmer the puree until it is golden brown.
4. Add remaining ingredients and the SerendipiTea's Lapsang Souchong sachet and mix thoroughly.
5. Simmer sauce for 20 minutes. Stir to prevent sticking and burning.
6. Add salt and pepper to taste. Remove from heat and cool to room temperature.

Plating/Garnish:

Baste, dip, drench, or dab with any of your favorite summertime meats, fish, or veggies

*Faux Cocoa ~ Organic Rooibos, Chocolate Vanilla, Apple, Cinnamon, Cardamom, Clove & Ginger (Caffeine-Free)

*Lapsang Souchong ~ Organic Chinese Black Tea (smoky)



Linda Villano is
Co-Founder/President of SerendipiTea.
The NY-Based Importer/Manufacturer est.
in 1995, specializes in Premium Tea &
Tisane and Small Batch Blends.
SerendipiTea.com

Photo Credits: SerendipiTea



TEA IS POETRY POURED

By Susan Patterson aka Earlene Grey

How do we find each other in this world? How do our friends, spouses, children know where we are going to be when we are living on planet Earth. How do our paths cross? And why?

I cannot believe it is all by chance. Nor can I believe the stars hold authority over what we say and do. I bet at one time in my existence, I knew. Ah, but now I have forgotten. However, I also bet that sooner or later, I will know again. You will too.

As you are pondering the mysteries of the Universe, here is a poem that talks about love through the ages. Let's think about these things for a while. Happy tea times. Your poet in Oregon, skip



Tea at Susan Patterson's home. Do you see the reflection of Susan Baker in the wine glass? Perhaps she was thinking about love through the ages?

The Good Love Will Be Timeless, The Great Love Will Be Endless

They wanted and waited
For nothing.
Time was neither a
Friend nor an enemy.
It wasn't really part of their life.

Time belonged to other people,
As did politics
And occupation
And rush.

Theirs was a world of
Tranquility by demand,
Intellect by nature,
Detachment by choice.

Love had found them young
And they claimed it
As their past and future.
There is no doubt,
No fear,
No need for explanation.

And so it will be,
No matter what.

Susan Patterson
01-2016



Susan Patterson is an unexpected author. She did not put writing into her life's plan. However, after a demanding and busy career in business, much to her surprise, poetry came to her. Ms. Patterson is an author of the heart and writer for the soul. Her work, it has been said, is so sharp, so intricate; it is like a Fabergé egg. Ms. Patterson's worldwide audience declares her writing to be in the top caliber of modern poets. Her work, which ranges from humorous to thoughtfully intelligent, is always quietly compelling. Please visit EarleneGrey.com



Highland Lake Inn

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This gentleman's farmhouse originally built in 1767 is located in Andover, NH, a stone's throw from Highland Lake, a pristine, spring-fed mountain lake with beach. The Highland Lake Inn is conveniently situated in the center of northern New England, 4 miles from renowned Proctor Academy, 10 miles from Ragged Mountain Ski Resort, and 20 miles from New Hampshire's capital, Concord. New Hampshire's White Mountains, Vermont's Green Mountains, the Maine Coast, and the city of Boston are all within a 2 hour car ride. Kayak and bicycle rental is available on premises. Innkeepers are fluent in French, German, and some Spanish.

The Highland Lake Inn also serves readily as a gathering place for reunions, weddings, business retreats or family and holiday gatherings as well as teas and high teas that many local organizations take advantage of.



Savor the vistas of neighboring Highland Lake, Kearsarge Mountain, and enjoy the Inn's own 7-acre grounds which adjoin a 21-acre nature preserve. More than 25 years ago, John Harney made the decision to found Harney & Sons Fine Teas. Harney is committed to offering the finest teas, and as proof to that achievement, Harney & Sons Teas has been awarded "the best Tea served in England" by the British Tea Council for the past four years. Harney's love of tea has spread worldwide, and the Harneys know that we too have an appreciation of their perfect teas.



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IN GOOD TASTE

Celebrating Tea, Celebrating Life by Birendra “Jopy” Perera

Has the time already passed by so soon? As we slowly ease our lives back into the “new normal” status of living, we should be thankful that most of us followed the rules and have weathered the storm to be able to go back to “living”.

Hi everyone and welcome to more ramblings of a tea taster. Previously I spoke to you about enjoying the freedom of time and relaxation. Now that we enjoyed the luxury of time, relaxed our senses, and recharged for the next chapter in our lives, we must then celebrate the freedom of living. Celebration always means enjoying freedom and our liberties, to be ourselves. This means that how we choose to celebrate reflects our personality and our desires. Whilst we celebrate ourselves, we must always do so with each other in mind, and nothing brings people together better than tea – this has been time tested and proven.

The invitation to tea, is the call to each of our personalities to express ourselves. And while we do so, our awareness of each other’s likes and dislikes is important for all of us to enjoy. Tea is for everyone, just like life and the world.

So, let us set the mood – when do we decide to “celebrate”? there needn’t be an “occasion” for this celebration, all you need is you and your tea. Value tip – add friends, this always makes any celebration great – especially teatime! But remember, these days the safe levels of distancing must be practiced. Being considerate is always a good thing. If we really need a reason – birthdays, meeting friends, anniversaries, friends-a-versaries, going back to work, meeting your neighbors.... it is truly limitless, just like the options for tea.

How do we celebrate? Now this is where things get exciting. Tea is best enjoyed with accompaniment; many a social setting revolves around food and drink, and in this celebratory situation, there should be no difference. Choice and selection are the prerogative of the seasoned gourmand. Selecting the right accompaniment will vary largely upon the time of day, the type of gathering and of course the mood we are in.

Whilst most of us enjoy something sweet, there are moments savory foods are just the right fit. We could begin our celebration with a simple snack; be it cheese on toast, a smoked salmon bagel, crackers and cheese, spicy pecans, honey roasted pork

snacks or even something left over in your refrigerator, it is going to go well with your mood, your company and most importantly your tea. Select from the heart – that is always the wisest decision.

If you are one with a heavy sweet tooth, then it would mean that the confectionaries will beckon – cake, sweet pastries, chocolate and in general most sweet treats depending on your palate, your culture, the amalgamations of culture that you have experienced, and it is this mix that makes for an interesting celebration. The ethnicity of everything you have experienced in your life all rolled into the one moment you desire to celebrate. So, go ahead, indulge yourself, pick up the piece of cake, have one more macaroon, and let it all be washed down with the tea of your choice. Centuries of evolution, a millennium full of past experiences, and an exhilaration of the senses that is in your present moment – good taste! Now isn’t that worth celebrating?

The mood is set, and the food has been chosen, all that remains is to select your tea. Earlier on I mentioned that this would be largely dependent on your mood – and this is true to the large extreme, unless your experiences are limited, in which case it is the perfect excuse to broaden your horizons on this endless topic of tea.

If you are a simple lover of tea – you will ease into something traditional – tea – black or with milk, green – Japanese sencha, Chinese dragon pearls, herbal – peppermint, chamomile or maybe some bush tea, better known as red tea? Whatever you chose, what is more important to remember is that either of your choices has come into your cup through the love someone bore for it in a field far away from where you are now. They used the gifts of mother nature, grew a leaf, an herb or a shrub using their skill which has come to them through timeless evolution of knowledge and discovery, to turn out something amazing that will give you pleasure, which will bring you closer to someone and to appreciate life for what it means to be alive. Just as much as you chose your tea, your food and your company, this tea has inadvertently chosen you to celebrate being alive and appreciating all those around you.

Enjoy your cup with those you love, and until next time, enjoy tea in good taste.



Birendra Perera grew up in a family business through which he engrained or “infused” himself in the art of selecting and tasting the finest teas of Sri Lanka. As a director of Mlesna Group, Birendra leads the marketing and export of tea; actively participates in the procurement of tea at public auctions; procures unique flavours and ingredients; and expertly carries out daily tea tasting and blending activities ensuring all Mlesna products match their tagline, “Naturally the best!” Birendra has worked with major universities; is a regular presenter; and works closely with the Colombo Tea Traders Association and the Sri Lanka Tea Board on promotion, authenticity and the global marketing of Pure Ceylon Tea from Sri Lanka. MlesnaTeas.com

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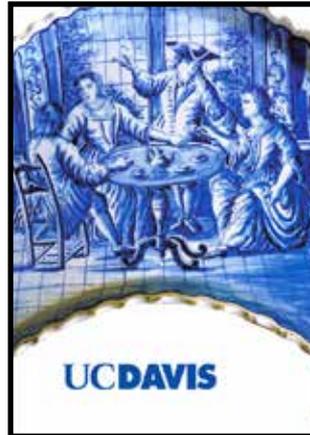


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