

YUMMY NORTHWEST

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TEATIME!

Some current thinking seems to be that if you are *not* drinking green tea, you might as well climb into your coffin.

But let's not get carried away. A balanced diet has to be the key to good health: fruits, vegetables, some form of protein, a nice cup of hot chocolate.

At least one Web site warns of drinking too much green tea:
www.mercydesmoines.org/ADAM/AlternativeMedicine/ConsHerbs/GreenTea.asp.
Read it, and be gentle with yourself.

Four cups a day seem recommended, though. So put the kettle on, and sit down to enjoy the following.



MYSTERY TEA

Death by Darjeeling
Gunpowder Green
Shades of Earl Grey
by Laura Childs

Visit the Indigo Tea Shop in Charleston, S.C., and watch Theodosia Browning brew tea and solve crimes. Recipes are included.

WHAT'S IN IT?

CAFFEINE CONTENT IN
ONE CUP

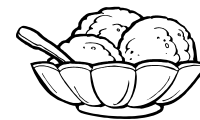
| | |
|-----------------|------------|
| COFFEE | 150-200 MG |
| BLACK TEA | 60-90 MG |
| OOLONG TEA | 50-75 MG |
| GREEN TEA | 35-50 MG |
| DECAF COFFEE | 2-6 MG |
| DECAF BLACK TEA | 2-3 MG |

SOURCE: CHOICE ORGANIC
TEAS, SEATTLE



"IN MAKING BLACK TEA, PROCESSORS ALLOW THE LEAVES TO WITHER, BUT IN MAKING GREEN TEA, PROCESSORS STEAM THE LEAVES IN A HOT PAN RIGHT AFTER THEY ARE PICKED. THE STEAMING RENDERS CERTAIN ENZYMES IN THE LEAVES INACTIVE AND HALTS FERMENTATION. AS A RESULT, GREEN TEA CONTAINS HIGHER LEVELS OF CANCER-COMBATING ANTIOXIDANTS."

AMBER NIMOCKS FOR THE
FORT WORTH (TEXAS)
STAR-TELEGRAM



WE ALL SCREAM FOR GREEN TEA

This recipe from Cooking Light magazine combines the health benefits of green tea with the ecstasy of ice cream.

Green Tea Ice Cream

1 ½ cups water

¾ cup sugar

2 tablespoons (or 3 tea bags) green tea

4 teaspoons fresh lemon juice

1 ¼ cups whole milk

Combine water and sugar in a small pan; bring to a boil, stirring until sugar dissolves. Add tea; cover and steep 5 minutes. Strain into a bowl and discard leaves. Stir in lemon juice; chill completely.

Stir in milk. Pour mixture into the freezer can of an ice-cream freezer; freeze according to manufacturer's instructions. Spoon the ice cream into a freezer-safe container; cover and freeze 2 hours or until firm.

Makes six ½-cup servings.

WITH SUBTLE TEA

With the help of two knowledgeable women at the Perennial Tea Room in Seattle, Jehan and one of the owners, Sue, I began my quest to understand the delights of specialty green teas.

Sue suggested a variety of teas to taste (see the following taste test for names) and provided some standard brewing guidelines.

Generally, green tea should steep for two minutes in water 170-180 degrees. How do you know the temperature? "Use a digital thermometer," said Jehan.

Wait a minute. Tea has been brewed for centuries, long before anything became digital or there were even manual thermometers. Isn't there an easier way to tell when the water is ready?

Yes: Bring the water to a boil, then let it sit for about three minutes to cool a bit. Having learned to drink tea when I lived in London, I thought this quite tepid compared to the piping hot beverage the English prefer. But as I soon discovered, green tea is delicate, and the cooler temperature does help you taste it better.

Assisted by my good friend Chloe, a discerning, articulate and boldly honest person, I was ready for the taste test. Thus Chloe and I sipped leisurely albeit critically from her grandmother's fine china, beginning with the most subtle tea.

JAPANESE TEA CEREMONY

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The following are Chloe's comments, which I tended to agree with. Except, I *really do like* green tea, even the bland ones.

SILVER NEEDLE (Chinese; actually a white tea that is gaining popularity; steeped for 7 minutes) – "No fragrance; to me a lot of drinking tea is fragrance. Earthy taste, like it was brewed with beauty bark."

DRAGONWELL (Chinese) – "Mostly it tastes like I'm drinking hot water. It's not unpleasant, but I wouldn't go out and buy it."

PINHEAD GUNPOWDER (Chinese) – "It's got 'oomph'. Now I feel like I am drinking something more than warm water."

SENCHA HANASE (Japanese) – "Tastes like grass or hay. I like hay better than earthy. It's pale green; very nice."

Summary: "If I'm going to sit down and have a nice cup of tea, it isn't going to be green. The only reason I drink green tea is because it's supposed to be good for you."

Special thanks to
The Perennial Tea Room
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About YUMMY NORTHWEST

Each monthly issue highlights an edible delight available in the Pacific Northwest.

Contact the editor

Comments, corrections, topic ideas and submissions are all most welcome.
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