



The TEA House Times™



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759 Bloomfield Ave #236
West Caldwell NJ 07006
(973) 551-9161

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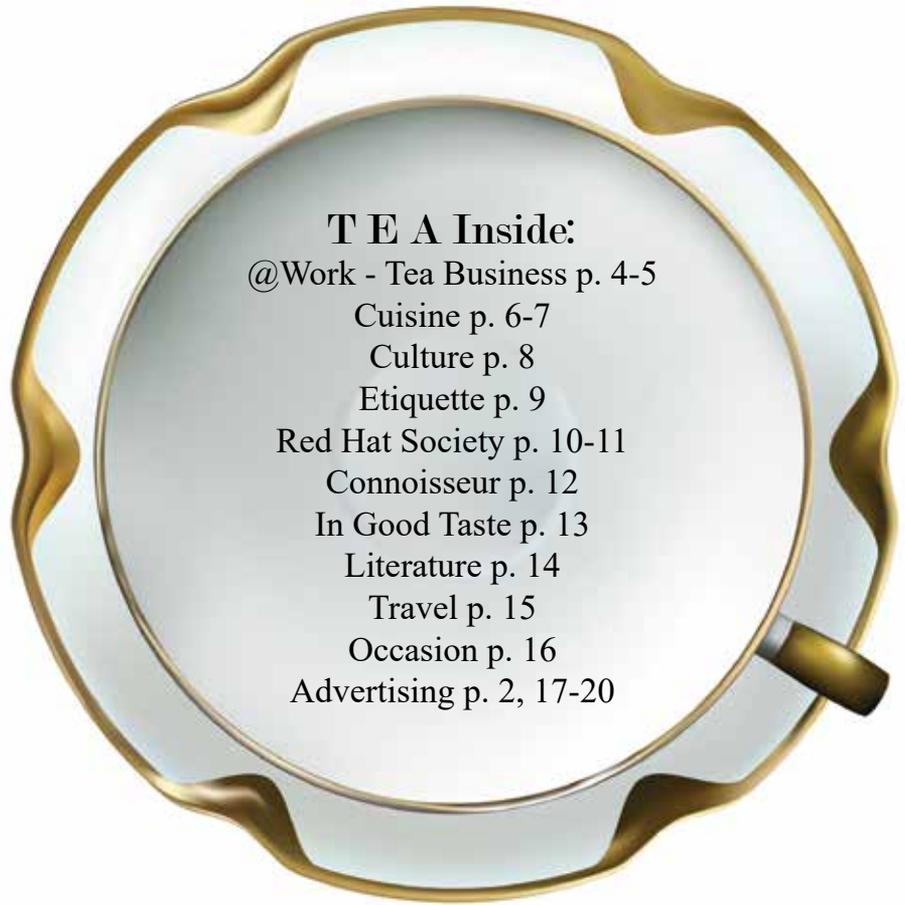


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Greetings from The TEA House Times!

The month of May is right around the corner. We are already preparing our presentations for SIAL Canada. It is a trade only food and beverage show, happening in Montreal this year from May 15-17. In addition to the Inspire Drink demonstration area led by The Tea House Times and Alam-bika, SIAL has introduced a special “Beverage Village” on the show floor to showcase exhibitors in this category. Several beverage companies and tea and coffee exhibitors have already reserved their spaces near Inspire Drink since they know how lively and beneficial the demonstrations are for the benefit of the attendees and exhibitors alike. We hope you check it out and consider exhibiting or visiting if you are in the food and beverage industry in any way.

Very soon, World Tea Expo (WTE) takes place in Las Vegas, March 18-20. It is an important event to attend if you are in the tea industry. Learn, connect, and network while you taste incredible teas from around the world!

Unfortunately, The Tea House Times will not be exhibiting at WTE since we had a previous engagement planned during

SALUTATIONS

this time period. We are, of course, still sponsoring as Media – for over 20 years!! All exhibitors are encouraged to send samples and/or press releases to us. Contact us via info@theteahousetimes.com to arrange.

Coffee Fest takes place at the Javits Center in NYC March 3-5 and there are two beauty events happening at the same time. Watch @teahousetimes on Instagram for recaps.

See you soon!



All the best,

*Gail
Gastelu*

@WORK

A message from . . .



I've been very fortunate over the years to travel the world during my tea career. Beginning in 1979, I've been able to work and visit all the major tea producing and many of the smaller growing regions.

I am just now completing a trip to India which included attending the 25th Session of the Intergovernmental Group on Tea (FAO) as well as the Bicentenary Assam Tea International Conference (BITAC 2024).

Assam is the largest tea producing region in the world, producing almost 700 million kgs. It is known for thick and malty CTC teas as well as some of the finest orthodox teas with strong flavor and beautiful, golden tipped leaf.

Both meetings held in Guwahati, examined the challenges and emerging trends in the industry and reviewed possible solutions and pathways to success.

Whether it be sustainability, small tea holder needs, tea & human health, climate change or current supply imbalance, the entire tea industry continues to work together to create a viable value chain in which all participants receive fair remuneration for their contributions.

I continue to be positive about the future of tea. The level of participation, the thoughtfulness of all participants and the passion for tea evidenced throughout these meetings, assure a future in which the tea industry will thrive.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Peter F. Goggi".

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

A message from . . .



In 2017, the Sri Lanka Tea Board brought me to their lovely country twice! First to show me around and help curate their tour for media visits later in the year; when they brought me there a second time, to celebrate 150 years for Ceylon tea. During the 150th year celebrations, the SLTB led media tours for representatives from around the world while important, worldwide, leaders and delegates in the tea industry convened for the conference of a lifetime. Truly impressive things happen in that small, island country. Did you know there are seven unique regions growing tea, each with its own very distinct terroir which contributes to taste profiles and characteristics of the quality Ceylon tea, known by the Lion Logo? Equally impressive is their ability to bring together people from around the world to share ideas, learn better methods, and discuss important issues of the tea industry in one place. The venue for this event, again, is the stunning, elegant, beautiful Cinnamon Grand hotel. Cinnamon is a well-known name in Sri Lanka as the brand owns the most luxurious hotel properties in each region from beach areas to hill country to wild safari areas of Yala too. The convention takes place July 24-26, 2024. Visit CeylonTeaEvents.com and register soon!

The theme of the Colombo International Tea Convention, 2024, is "Tea, A Lifestyle & A Livelihood." The essence of the event is represented in the logo you will see at their website. "The central element, tea, represents its forms, flavours, and cultural significance. The tea leaf is delicately illustrated, showcasing the beauty and intricacy of nature, highlighting the purity and authenticity of tea. Intertwined tea leaves represent togetherness. A subtle globe represents the global nature of the event. And, the shape of a lotus flower, a universal symbol of purity also represents tea and the integrity of the convention's theme." Love it! GO!

A handwritten signature in green ink that reads "gail".

Gail Gastelu
Owner/publisher
TheTeaHouseTimes.com
TeaTradeShow.com



A message from . . .



I had long wanted to visit India and the places where the teas I love are grown. First stop Darjeeling; arguably one of the most iconic tea origins. This region in the foothills of the Himalayas, is an awe-inspiring environment, where the impact of terroir delivers the prized spring teas that are renowned around the world. Only 500 kilometers to the east is Assam, a different world in terms of landscape, characterised by more frequent shade trees and a flatter terrain. Here they produce full-bodied, malty teas, which are great with milk and a critical element of the breakfast blends we enjoy in the UK.

Both regions face challenges which are exacerbated by the burden of the ever-growing list of export market compliancy requirements. However, in discussions with the growers and researchers from Tea Research Association (TRA) Tocklai, we learnt about the innovative solutions in development to support tea production. These collaborative discussions continued at the 25th session of the FAO Intergovernmental Group (IGG) on Tea, in Guwahati. Tea Board of India and TRA, Tocklai, did a fantastic job of hosting the IGG-Tea, which followed the Bicentenary Assam Tea Conference (BATIC 2024). This attracted over 400 delegates from 25 countries and the two events created a vital forum for knowledge exchange and enabled new partnerships to be forged.

Shabnam mentions the two work pillars agreed at IGG-Tea, designed to encourage further collaboration and I am looking forward to representing the UK and Co-Chairing the new Sustainability Pillar with Kenya. Initially, this will bring together learnings from IGG-Tea members around the globe on the carbon footprint of tea, with support from our colleagues in FAO and the Climate Change Working Group, which has been led by Sri Lanka, India, China and Kenya. However, understanding emissions is just one area, and one where tea probably has a good story to tell. Visiting tea fields in Darjeeling and Assam really brought home the urgent need for the global tea industry to work together to address the challenges the industry faces. Discussions at BATIC 2024 and the IGG-Tea were a great starting point, we must now act.



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

A message from . . .



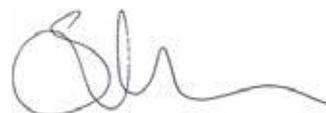
There really is nothing quite like walking through tea fields and spending time with the people who make our tea. I had the privilege to do just that, in India. The precipice of my travels was to attend the Bicentenary Assam Tea International Conference (BAT-IC) followed by the 25th session of the UN Food & Agriculture Organization Intergovernmental Group on Tea (FAO-IGG/Tea). And putting the time to be amongst tea prior to these meetings was the perfect reminder of why we were there. We talked a lot about the challenges faced by the tea industry, sustainability in all forms, tea quality and over-production. Meetings such as BATIC and the FAO-IGG/Tea allow a place for us all to step out from behind our desks and gather to discuss and hopefully find some solutions.

I had the privilege of being asked to speak at BATIC on a new generation of consumers – Generation Z and Alpha, more on that in another article. But the real work was at the FAO-IGG/Tea where I was honoured to be elected Vice-Chair of the group. Most important however, was the forming of two pillar groups for the organisation – Sustainability and Promotion, with two projects earmarked to be executed in the next 24 months.

The first pillar, Sustainability, co-Chaired by Kenya, and the UK, has taken on a carbon project. The mission to gather data from all producing countries to help contribute towards a life-cycle analysis of tea.

The second pillar, Promotion, co-Chaired by Sri Lanka, and Canada has taken on a generic promotion project. This group will establish a global promotion campaign which each country can execute targeting younger consumers and focusing in on Sport & Fitness. Stay tuned for progress on both these pillars.

But I must go back to how the trip started, and that was in the tea fields. Knowing why we are doing what we're doing, what "pillars" and "projects" are truly meant to serve, that I believe, is where all these meetings, by industry leaders or policy makers, should start and frankly, end.



Shabnam Weber
President
Tea and Herbal
Association of Canada
Tea.ca & TeaSommelier.com



CUISINE

Celebrating Spring by Karen Donnelly

The freshness of lemons bring a burst of flavor to springtime dishes. Used in both sweet and savory dishes, versatile lemons are a popular ingredient whether as a star or supporting actor.



Artichoke Spinach Tea Sandwiches

A savory, flavorful vegetarian tea sandwich that is a light addition to your sandwich selection. That little bit of lemon adds freshness to the sandwich filling.

Makes 12-16 tea sandwiches

8 slices of whole wheat bread

For sandwich filling blend together:

4 oz cream cheese, softened
1/4 cup mayonnaise

1 12 or 14-oz jar marinated artichoke hearts, drained well and chopped
1 tsp. dried dill weed
1 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
1/4 tsp. black pepper

Stir in a handful of fresh baby spinach, torn in half or quarters.

Spread on bread to make 4 full sandwiches. Trim off crust. To serve, cut into thirds or quarters.



Lemon Poppy Seed Scones

Makes 6-8 scones

2 cups unbleached flour
1-1/2 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. baking soda
1/3 cup sugar
2 Tbsp. poppy seeds
Zest and juice of one lemon
6 Tbsp. unsalted butter
1/2 cup buttermilk

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.

Stir together flour, sugar, baking powder, soda, lemon zest, and poppy seeds in large bowl. Cut the butter in well, with pieces no larger than pea size.



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, selling premium teas, tea ware, and gifts. Join her for on-line Tea & Cookery classes and classes on tea production styles, preparation and history. See GreenhalghTea.com



Add lemon juice to liquid measuring cup. Add buttermilk to lemon juice to measure ½ cup.

Fold into dry mix, careful not to over mix or knead dough. Add a little buttermilk if the dough is too dry.

On a floured surface, gather up dough and fold and press a few times until it's ready to roll out.

Roll dough about 1/2" thick and cut into desired size and shape.

You may also form dough into a 7" circle and cut it into 8 wedges. Separate wedges on baking sheet.

Brush the tops of scones with a little buttermilk.

Bake for 15 minutes, checking at 12 minutes and watch until scones are ready.



Lemon Drops

These dainty lemon drops are easy to make for your tea table.

Makes 2-1/2 dozen

1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour

1/2 teaspoon baking powder

¼ teaspoon salt

½ cup butter

4 Tbsp granulated sugar

2 Tbsp. powdered sugar

1 teaspoon vanilla

Zest and juice of one lemon

(should be about 2 Tbsp. lemon juice).

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

In a small bowl whisk together flour, baking powder, lemon zest, and salt. Set aside.

Using a stand or hand-held mixer, cream together butter and sugars. Beat in vanilla and lemon juice. Slowly add in dry ingredients at low speed to form dough.

Roll tablespoon size balls of dough into balls and place on parchment lined baking sheet.

Bake for about 10 minutes. The cookies will not flatten. Place cookies on cooling rack.

Glaze when cooled.

Glaze

1-2 cups powdered sugar

Remaining lemon juice

Yellow food coloring (optional)

Pour the lemon juice in a small bowl. Slowly add in powdered sugar until it is a pourable, heavy cream-like consistency.

Add a drop or two of yellow coloring and stir until blended. This is not necessary, but I think the pop of yellow says "lemon."

While warm, dip the top of each cookie into the glaze. If the cookies are completely cooled, it is easier to spread the glaze with a small offset spatula.

Let the glaze set before serving.



CULTURE

Spring Has Sprung by Gail Henderson

“Spring Has Sprung,” (Ogden Nash) for those of us who have been pretty bound up by a cold and stormy winter. Thankfully, regardless of what you see outside, there are new ways to enjoy tea this spring, some startlingly new and others traditionally meaningful.

First the new! Coming to your city soon, the latest trend is Tea Bus Tours, serving afternoon tea as you see the sights of your town or city. Or if you are touring New York, right on Broadway a new tea experience recently opened (one of 3000 stores now global) called HEYTEA. As you might expect from the name, it is geared towards a youthful, trendy crowd who is looking for the answers to our time, to be found in a tea company whose motto is a pretty tall order today: “Promoting quality, Living Joy.” At the least, it’s trendy and popular with the social media set. It premiered two offerings: “Very Grape Cheese” Tea (cheese foam blended w. fresh tea) and “Roasted Brown Boba Milk”. I have yet to try cheese tea.

Bubble tea or boba tea, however, came to my attention awhile back but has now sprung forth as a new trend. How trendy? I live in a small city, but my 10-year-old granddaughter had already discovered boba tea in a recently opened store in a small shopping center! Apparently boba is “the new sprinkles” and is garnering more attention than ever now since Twrl Milk Tea Company has blended tea with milk or fruit juice and added chewy tapioca balls infused with brown sugar. I remember the tapioca balls awhile back as white tea pearls. Only these balls are black and can be purchased separately in a “topping packet.” You don’t even need tea! Progress! Seriously, they come “highly recommended” by Bon Appetit Magazine!

To begin spring in a meaningful way in March and April, three of the world’s largest religions focus on renewal rather than just the new. These two months this year could be the most religious months of the year due to an unusual calendar. In order, Ramadan, St. Patrick’s Day, Palm Sunday, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, and Passover all occur in these two months. All have special tea traditions depending on the countries celebrating.

For example, Ramadan encourages fasting and prayer with herbal teas. For Passover, Jews are united worldwide when drinking kosher teas. Tea and tea bags as well as loose tea must all be certified to contain no leavened ingredients. It should be certified as kosher by a recognized certification agency and labeled as such. Christians celebrate new life with family and church gatherings. They begin their celebrations with a blessing after a season of fasting during Lent.

We too can be a part of a meaningful cup of tea by praying before we sip for world peace as well as a world that values spiritual renewal.



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



With the Many Dog Lovers out There, is There Actually Dog Etiquette?



It is spring! This time of year, as we see the winter melt away, we may tend to be outside more.

One of the more common ways for us to enjoy the outside is with our pets. Whether on a walk, at the park or just in our own yards.

Dogs love to be outside, especially with other people and puppy friends. However, please be aware, not all people like dogs, so it is up to the owner to present a well socialized and behaved pup.

Many of us live in neighborhoods, so while on a walk with your furry friend be mindful that there are plenty of people that do not want someone's dog using the bathroom on their lawn, in their garden, on their mail-

box or anywhere in their yard. Even if you pick up what you can, this is still considered impolite.

It is up to the pet owner to show respect for the neighbors and their private property by being courteous and steering their pet away from the neighbor's yards and gardens, whenever possible to a more open or public area.

In addition, please be reminded that most states have leash laws. While leashed, your dog is unable to run into traffic or investigate any curious distractions, and leashes allow the public to pass undisturbed.

Dog etiquette suggests that the leash be no longer than six feet when traveling on a public sidewalk and the use of retractable leashes be used only in areas with minimal people traffic.

A little training along with consideration for others helps people think well of you and your dog.



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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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.



TURNING ORDINARY INTO

Memorable

OCCASIONS

The women of the Red Hat Society find joy and peace in the timeless tradition of tea parties, where laughter and conversation flow as freely as the aromatic brew. Gathered in elegant settings, they savor delicate teas, indulge in scrumptious treats, and share stories that intertwine like steam rising from their cups. Adorned in stylish hats and dresses, these gatherings become a celebration of friendship and camaraderie. Whether held in cozy living rooms or lush gardens, tea parties offer a delightful escape from the hustle of daily life. As tea leaves dance in porcelain cups, women relish these moments of connection, turning ordinary afternoons into memorable occasions of laughter and bonding.



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CONNOISSEUR

In Good Taste - Ramblings of a Tea Taster

by Birendra “Jopy” Perera

Hello again fellow tea aficionados of the world! As spring approaches, we all need to look ahead at new beginnings, making new changes to old delights, and basically keeping our lives filled with fresh thoughts and newness in the hope that everything will always be better, no matter how hard things get. We all know the one thing that can alleviate any situation is the international elixir – tea!

Making new magic out of old mystery is something the world of tea has always managed to do with perfect execution, proving that true love never dies, it endures and blossoms. Just as in the past, we always look forward to what this amazing brew can bring us – be it black, green, herbal brew, or just basic infusion and simple home blends – the world of tea has proven one thing to itself – it isn’t short of innovative ideas and satisfying results.

In 2024, as a tea taster who continues to explore the world of tea and its infinite limitations and inexplicable means of satisfaction, I intend to take more exciting journeys into exploring new tea blends. In the past I have urged all my lovely followers to be creative, to step outside the box of the mundane. We can all continue to do so, without hesitation, whilst adding on the importance of health and wellness; after all, that IS what tea is all about – health, wellness, and happiness!

So let us all hunt down a new experience, even if it means traversing the earth to pour that special cup, make that special blend and enjoy – especially with those we love.

I would also invite each one of you to journey to your place of happiness to create new meanings, new connections and new settings in which teas are enjoyed. It has been a longstanding dream of mine to bring together the world of travelling and the world of tea – so why not explore those places which have “special” meaning to us, to enjoy that special cup, in its birth setting? This can easily extend itself from cup to glass – and not limit itself to tea (isn’t that exciting?).

In doing so, we actually stumble upon new limitations for an old plant – not merely being satisfied with drinking the beverage, I intend to explore what else this leaf and bud can be used for to change and shape the lives and livelihoods of people, and in doing so I intend to find new ways in which this timeless brew is being fine-tuned for a newer audience who seeks new thrills from a time-tested beverage. This exercise is more than just simply revisiting what trends will make a difference; it is also a deeper exploration into the adventures of a tea aficionado.

The latest trends for 2024 in tea are to show how important this vibrant beverage is, from plant to cup, and how, throughout history, it has shaped the world, both in health and in society. If there was ever one thing that has enjoyed continuous evolution, it is the timelessness of a cup of tea and the history of the tea plant itself. It has also been discovered recently that the tea leaf in its fresh and raw form is brilliant to be consumed whole and contains more antioxidants thus making it very good for healthy diet plans. What this means is we should be looking closely at “who” makes our tea, just as much as “what” our tea is. The livelihood of people, the careers we live through and how they are connected to tea. This exploration could be a learning experience as well as a travelling experience, which will end with the result of empowerment of knowledge and the satisfaction of self. Now isn’t that a cup worth pouring into your soul?

I’m sure many of you know that I hail from the island of Sri Lanka – the home of black tea! One of the highlights lined up for the summer in Sri Lanka is the Colombo International Tea Convention which takes place in July in the capitol city of Sri Lanka – Colombo! This event brings together every aspect of the world of tea as well as bringing together every nation that produces tea as well as those nations that love to drink this magical brew.

Basically, the whole world of tea will be converging on my little island to experience, learn and be enthralled by the limitless capabilities of this wonderful beverage and in that process learn new trends and create new partnerships of the leaf we love the most. And of course this will culminate in one giant tea party which ends up on the tropical beaches of my tiny, yet wonderful island! If you love tea, and are excited to discover an exotic holiday destination, this would be a fantastic event for anyone associated with tea. July 23rd – 26th 2024!

Whilst I digress here, without being able to hide my enthusiasm, let us re-focus on “New Beginnings”, which is always a good topic for the beginning of the year and on into springtime. One might ask “what can be new, about something so old?” when it comes to tea. But the point to be observed and “infused” into our minds should be that old as it is tea will always be the number one refresher, the perfect “reset” button and the best start to everything.

So! To begin this wonderful experience, I’d like to introduce what we Sri Lankans call a “yard of tea” which is mostly consumed at the beginning of the day, and is somewhat like a tea latte. It isn’t the same as a yard of ale – I can tell you that! But here’s what the yard of tea will mean to each of you: Imagine a very strong black tea, brewed at a 100 degrees Celsius, thick, rich and dark in color, almost like a gutty red wine, but hotter than you can imagine, poured over freshly heated full cream milk with a healthy helping of sugar and a spoon full of condensed milk and a spoon full of evaporated milk. Whilst the tea stands in one large mug/jug, the other ingredients stand in another mug/jug. Whilst both cups full are steaming, the most important part comes next – the infusion. The hot tea is poured at great speed into the cup with the milk, condensed milk, evaporated milk and sugar.

To be clear, both cups should only be half full. Pouring the tea at great speed into the other cup the pourer must then pull up the hand which is pouring to the distance of approximately a yard (which is approximately a meter or 3 feet) and this pouring action will froth the milk and infuse the entire beverage together. This action must be repeated about 4 or 5 times to end with the perfect cup of Sri Lankan frothy, rich and sweet morning tea, otherwise known as a “yard of tea” or a “te yare”! Go on, try it, you know you want to. But be careful, and remember to enjoy this with those you love!

Until next time, enjoy your cuppa with those closest to you!



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**



LITERATURE

Tea, and Other Tales by Laura Childs

In my Tea Shop Mysteries, Theodosia and the Indigo Tea Shop gang are forever coming up with delicious new scone toppers. That's right, they're not just for breakfast anymore, so to get you started here are a few ideas.



Strawberry Jam and Devonshire Cheese – You can't go wrong with this classic combo.

Ricotta Cheese and Honey – Spread on ricotta, drizzle on honey, and sprinkle with chopped pistachios.

Smoked Salmon and Cream Cheese – Turn an ordinary scone into an updated bagel.

Guacamole and Diced Tomatoes – Create an elevated version of avocado toast.

Melted Gruyere Cheese – Spread on gruyere and toast under the broiler.

Bacon and Egg – This takes your scone into the realm of a hearty breakfast sandwich.

Blueberries and Maple Syrup – Spread scone with cream cheese, then top with blueberries and maple syrup.

Black Forest Scone – Spread scones with black cherry jam, add a dollop of mascarpone (or whipped cream), then top with chocolate bits and a maraschino cherry.

Fig and Blue Cheese – Spread fig jam on your split scone and top with blue cheese crumbles.

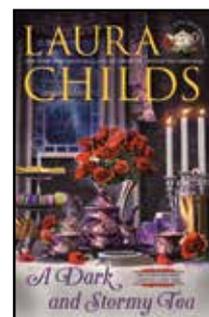
Find lots more tea time ideas in my new book *Murder in the Tea Leaves*.

Happy noshing!



Laura Childs is the author of the Tea Shop Mysteries, Scrapbook Mysteries, and Cackleberry Club Mysteries. All have been on the New York Times, USA Today, and Publisher's Weekly bestseller lists. Recently, Book Riot named her mysteries to their list of "25 of the All Time Best Cozy Mystery Series." In her previous life Laura was CEO of her own marketing firm, authored several screenplays, and produced a reality TV show. She is married to Dr. Bob, a professor of Chinese art history, and has a Chinese Shar-Pei named Lotus.

www.LauraChilds.com or on Facebook at [LauraChildsAuthor](https://www.facebook.com/LauraChildsAuthor)



Grace Farms

305 Lukes Wood Road
New Canaan, CT 06840

203-920-1702

Website: GraceFarmsFoods.com
GraceFarms.org



Grace Farms, at first, might make you wonder, what is this? Is it a brand selling tea and coffee? Is it a nature preserve? Is it a philanthropic organization of some sort? All of the above is the answer. They want to do good things, help people to understand how causes which are important to the organization might be made better around the world. Tea and coffee help make the connection. Because when we sit together to enjoy a cup of tea (or coffee), we are taking time for ourselves to contribute to wellness, strengthen relationships, clear our minds, and find a path forward in each person's own way. When you discover more about Grace Farms Foundation, you will quickly and easily understand how enjoying an amazing cup of tea or sitting in a peaceful place in nature, can strengthen our minds and connections with others to do better for all.

The mission of Grace Farms seems too vast to explain in this column, so we will leave it to you to explore that side of their Foundation and humanitarian initiatives. Here we will focus on tea.

It is free to visit and explore the beautiful grounds at Grace Farms. It is serene, calming, and beautiful. Take a walk, visit for an event in their beautiful auditorium, or go for afternoon tea. You will not be disappointed! "The River building was intentionally designed to help visitors pause and consider what it means to flourish personally and as a community." And inside the beauti-



ful Pavilion area, all glass, you will enjoy a wonderful tea experience!

Frank Kwei is Grace Farms' resident tea master and coffee aficionado. Since 2015, Frank has been welcoming visitors to Grace Farms with his thoughtfully selected teas. Frank hosts a wide variety of tea education programs. When The Tea House Times visited, we enjoyed several expertly brewed teas, thanks to Frank. And, of course, the delicious afternoon tea bites as shown in the photo here, were equally delicious and really added to the experience.

An event calendar along with afternoon tea dates may be found at GraceFarms.org. Tickets for afternoon tea may be purchased via the website event calendar. To purchase tea online, visit GraceFarmsFoods.com where you may also learn about the founders of Grace Farms Foundation and Grace Farms Foods. Enjoy!



OCCASION

A Stitch in “Tea” Time by Kim Hendrickson

Nothing is more comforting than drinking tea while working on a needlework project. Be it knitting, quilting, crochet, or embroidery, feeling productive while enjoying a cuppa is heaven on earth.

Being part of a sewing circle or group is just a communal evolution of that feeling and today, as in the past, the sewing circle was often a source of community event support. Sewing circles during most wars made clothes for servicemen, more modern groups made quilts for veterans or children in need.

The first sewn garment originated in Egypt, important tools we use today: iron needles created in the 14th century and needles with eyes a century later, and the “thumb-bell” (thimble) were made in 1695 by a Dutch metalsmith. The act of sewing including patterns and accessories resulted in uniforms, flags or home decor. Part of that history tells us that knitters and crocheters used cotton and silk long before wool and was a male only endeavor. The crafts of the past make up the fabric of our individual histories and can make an interesting tea theme.

Get friends together for an afternoon tea or evening event and show them how one’s soul is fed by needle and thread.

- Send a snail mail invite threading yarn or thread through blank cards punching holes to make a simple design.
- Include a square of muslin in each invitation for your friends to sew and bring to the tea to be assembled into a future quilt or wall hanging OR ask them to design it to bring to the gathering to be sewn together as a group.
- Another idea is offer your guests a tutorial on basic embroidery stitches for them to practice while they sip.
- Use a stitched quilt as a table cloth. Remember to spray the surface with Scotch Guard to insure no staining.
- Create a centerpiece by piling a tower of assorted balls of yarn (using toothpicks to hold them together), filling the cracks with crochet needles and knitting needles and scraps of material pinched into ruffles.
- Make hand crafted felt needle books for favors. There are many easy directions online.
- Instead of spoons for hot or cold tea, use crochet needles to stir a hot cup, or knitting needles for cold tea.
- Serve the food on plates covered with scraps of material instead of doilies. We all have plenty of those.
- Some teas have very vibrant colors so serve those that echo the colors of your table. Maybe matcha, red/orange tisanes like orange or hibiscus and strawberry.
- Scones could be a mixed berry with cream or a pistachio lime zest scone with lime curd....maybe serving the cream in a large thimble?
- Think classic sandwiches: tuna salad, crumbled bacon, chopped tomato and lettuce or open-faced thinly sliced roast beef mounded with a drizzle of yummy gravy.
- Dessert could include butter cookies shaped into buttons punching 2 or 4 holes in each as a finishing touch or chocolate cups (found in most big box stores) filling them with chocolate mousse, calling them “thimbles of chocolate”, or fruit leather (because it looks like material) cut into squares, opposing corners stuck together to create a “cannoli structure”, then pipe in cannoli cream make a good dessert once sprinkled with sprinkles.
- Like to play games? Guess how many buttons in a jar. Sit down relay: who is the fastest when zipping a long zipper, rolling a small bowl of yarn and folding a large sheet of material into a 8” X 8” packet. Maybe a quiz of historic details (pulled from the internet).



“What I make with my hands, I give with my heart” -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

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SIAL CANADA, Montreal - May 15-17, 2024

Visit TheTeaHouseTimes.com event calendar for information.

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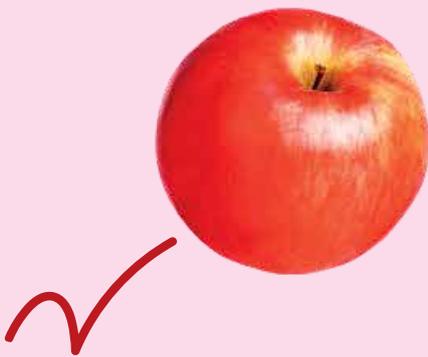
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