

Louise's Story - Brewing the Perfect "Cuppa"

A new phenomenon is sweeping North America - tea sales are outstripping sales of coffee among 20-somethings. This comes as no surprise to me. I'm a prime example of the market statistic in action.

I can't remember a time when I didn't drink tea. A tea-lover from birth (I'm Irish and I think my forebears drank enough of it to make loving the little black leaves a genetic characteristic), my childhood memories of visiting with family and friends include images of teapots, milk jugs and digestive biscuits.

Today, my love for tea is hampered only by the size of my kitchen cupboards which contain an ever-growing collection of tea types and flavours: from comforting old orange pekoe to refreshing peppermint, soothing lemon chamomile to fruity blackcurrant and a whole host of flavours in between.

I'm not the only tea-freak amongst the 20-something population. The libation of choice at most, if not all, of the social gatherings I've been to lately is tea. Coffee after dinner isn't generally offered among my peers (we have enough stimulants in our life).

But sharing a good cuppa isn't just a 20-something phenomenon. Witness my elderly next-door neighbour who regularly invites me in for tea and a competitive game of dominoes.

During my weekly Tai Chi classes, we take a break halfway through to enjoy a cup of jasmine tea and a chance to chat.

High teas at hotels and restaurants have witnessed a veritable explosion in demand. My girlfriends from university and I jumped on the bandwagon and found the whole high tea experience extremely civilized and a great way to connect again.

Tea drinking has a long and distinguished history and I am always fascinated to see how different cultures make their own brew. From Indian chai to Argentinean mate or even old reliable Earl Grey, truly good cups of tea are good for the soul.



University pals gather for the obligatory photo after a few good cups of tea

The very best cup of tea, as I was taught to make them by my very particular (when it comes to tea brewing) mother, is made in a teapot and thus is meant to be shared.

So here's my contribution to the Tamarack community recipe collection – how to brew the perfect cup of tea.

Directions – generally common sense prevails, but watch for a little trick that ensures a great cup of tea

- Boil 6 cups of water in a kettle.
- This is the most important piece – please take note!* As soon as the kettle has boiled, pour about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the water into your teapot. Put the lid on the teapot and swirl the water around the teapot until the pot is well warmed. (A warmed

pot helps to ensure that the boiled water is used to brew the tea, not expend energy heating the teapot).

- ❑ Dump the water from the teapot; add 2 teabags or appropriate amount of tealeaves. Pour in remaining boiled water. Let stand for 6-8 minutes or until the tea reaches desired strength. Pour tea.

For an extra special experience, use the good china or some mugs that have meaning for you. Always sit when drinking your tea – take time to enjoy the warmth and comfort each cup brings.

Happy brewing!

