



TASTE BOOK

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Afternoon Tea History

We have the seventh Duchess of Bedford, Anna Maria Russell, to thank for the invention of afternoon tea in 1840. She'd get hungry around four in the afternoon, but dinner wasn't served until eight. So she started requesting a tray of tea, bread and butter and cake to be brought to her room in the late afternoon. Then she began inviting others to join her, and the tradition of afternoon tea was born!

The idea became very popular among the upper class. Over the years, its popularity spread to all social classes. It has endured ever since for its ability to bring people together and build friendships, as well as for the tea itself and the food.

Traditional afternoon tea consists of more than just tea. Tea is accompanied by a selection of dainty sandwiches served on the third tier of a tea stand, scones served with clotted cream and preserves on the second and cakes and pastries on the first.

Since the 18th century, the British have been the largest per capita consumers of tea in the world. According to the Tea Census, they drink over 100 million cups a day—that's around two cups for every adult in the country! Black tea, especially English Breakfast tea and Earl Grey tea, are the most popular. If there isn't time for full afternoon tea, the English will often have a cup with a digestive biscuit (slightly sweet, crumbly texture, considered to be a healthier alternative to other cookies).



Tea Options



Earl Grey Tea

Another one of the most popular black teas served for afternoon tea is Earl Grey tea. With a citrusy flavor, its natural sweetness pairs well with many afternoon tea sweets.

Assam Black Tea

Grown in the mountainous region of Assam, India, it's a robust tea with a sometimes astringent flavor that goes perfectly with a little milk and sugar and afternoon tea sweets, tea sandwiches and savory bites.

English Breakfast Tea

One of the most popular black teas served for afternoon tea is English Breakfast tea. A blend of black teas originating from Assam, Ceylon and Kenya, it's full-bodied, robust, rich and blended to go well with milk and sugar in a style traditionally associated with a hearty full English breakfast.

Chamomile Tea

The herbal infusion in Chamomile tea produces a floral, almost apple-like flavor. This is a great caffeine-free choice to enjoy with sweets, especially scones, and fruity desserts.

Sri Lanka Black Tea

The most famous Sri Lankan tea is Orange Pekoe. This tea has a light, floral flavor.

Darjeeling Tea:

Darjeelings are teas from Darjeeling, India and are a classic combination with afternoon tea foods.



First Tier

DESSERTS

Cheesecake Strawberries

Ingredients:

3 lbs. fresh large strawberries
8 oz. cream cheese, softened
1 cup powdered sugar
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1 1/2 cups heavy whipping cream
1/4 cup crushed graham
cracker crumbs

Directions:

Take a strawberry and split it down the center lengthwise, keeping the stems attached. Using a small knife, carve out a very small piece of strawberry flesh on the flat side of the strawberry to create a small bowl.

In a bowl, whip the heavy whipping cream on high speed until stiff peaks form, about 5-7 minutes. In a different bowl, add in the cream cheese, powdered sugar and vanilla. Beat on medium speed until fluffy and creamy, about 1 minute. Fold in the whipped cream until no streaks remain and everything is incorporated.

Fill a piping bag with the cheesecake mixture. Pipe the cheesecake mixture into the bowl of the strawberry you created. Immediately sprinkle with graham cracker crumbs.

Raspberry Lemon Cakes

Ingredients:

Lemon pound cake
Fresh raspberries
Raspberry jam

Directions:

Cut the lemon pound cake into 1-inch slices. Using a scone cutter, cut out circles in the slices. Spread cheesecake filling and raspberry jam on one slice, sandwich it with another slice and then top it with cheesecake filling and a fresh raspberry.

Puff Pastry Berries & Cream

Ingredients:

2 sheets of Puff Pastry

1 egg

2 1/2 cups heavy whipping
cream, divided

1 tbsp. vanilla extract

2/3 cup sugar

1/2 cup dark or milk chocolate
chips

Fruit

Directions:

Thaw Puff Pastry on the counter, then put one sheet on top of the other and press the two together by rolling gently with a rolling pin. Cut out circles with a 3-inch round cookie cutter. Move the circles to a baking sheet about one inch from each other. Using a 2-inch cookie cutter, press it in the middle of the circle, almost all the way through.

Preheat the oven to 425°F. Whisk the eggs together to make an egg wash. Using a pastry brush, brush the tops of each circle then generously sprinkle with sugar. Bake for 15 minutes.

Prepare ganache: Heat 1/2 cup heavy whipping cream until almost boiling. Pour over 1/2 cup chocolate chips. Let sit for 2-3 minutes. Stir until smooth. Transfer to a ziplock bag and cut one corner.

Prepare chantilly cream: Combine 2 cups heavy whipping cream, 2/3 cup sugar and vanilla in a bowl. Using an electric mixer, whip on high until stiff. Transfer to a gallon sized ziplock bag and cut one corner. Refrigerate until ready to use. Try to use within 15 minutes.

As soon as the pastries are baked and out of the oven, with your fingers or with a smaller cookie cutter, press in the middle to bring it down. Let cool completely and then fill with ganache, cream and fruit. These pastries are best served cold, right out of the fridge. Dust with powdered sugar before serving.

Chocolate Brownie-Mousse Stacks

Ingredients:

Brownie Mix

1 cup milk chocolate chips

1/4 cup creamy peanut
butter

2 1/4 cup heavy whipping
cream

1 cup white chocolate chips

Shaved chocolate

Directions:

Bake brownies according to directions on the box. Cool completely on a wire rack, then cut eight circles, using a 3-inch round cookie cutter.

Prepare milk chocolate mousse: Microwave milk chocolate chips and peanut butter in a bowl for 1 1/2 to 2 minutes or until melted and smooth, stirring every 30 seconds. Cool for 5 minutes. Beat 1 cup heavy whipping cream at medium speed with an electric mixer until soft peaks form; fold cream into milk chocolate mixture. Chill in the refrigerator.

Prepare white chocolate mousse: Microwave white chocolate chips and 1/4 cup cream in a bowl for 1 1/2 to 2 minutes or until melted and smooth, stirring every 30 seconds. Cool for 5 minutes. Beat remaining 1 cup cream at medium speed with an electric mixer until soft peaks form; fold into white chocolate mixture. Chill in the refrigerator.

Assemble stacks: Cut aluminum foil into eight 6 x 10 in pieces and fold each piece in half. Wrap a foil strip around each brownie; secure with a large paper clip. Spoon milk chocolate mousse into a ziplock bag and cut one corner. Pipe chocolate mousse onto brownies. Repeat with white chocolate mousse. Chill in the refrigerator for 2 hours. Remove foil before serving.

Date Nut Bread

Ingredients:

1 lb. dates, chopped
1 cup pecans or walnuts,
chopped
1 cup plus 2 tbsp. boiling
water
1 tsp. baking soda
1 cup sugar
2 cups all-purpose flour
1/4 tsp. salt
1 cup mayonnaise

Directions:

Pour boiling water over dates and nuts. Cook for a few minutes and let stand to cool. Preheat oven to 350°F.

Mix mayonnaise and sugar and beat until creamy. Sift flour, baking soda and salt together and add to mayonnaise mixture. Stir in dates and nuts.

Pour into two small loaf pans (greased). Bake for 40-45 minutes. Slice into small squares.

Cookie Truffles

Ingredients:

2 cups sugar cookie crumbs
(from about 18
medium cookies)
1 8 oz. package cream cheese,
softened
1/2 tsp. vanilla extract
3 cups white chocolate chips

Directions:

In a food processor, process the cookies until they are a sand-like consistency. Add in cream cheese and vanilla extract and pulse until all ingredients are combined. Alternatively, you could crush the cookies into crumbs and mix everything in a large bowl. From there use a small scoop and form the truffle mixture into small balls. Place on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper and freeze for 20 minutes or until the balls are firm and chilled.

Once the truffles are chilled, melt the white chocolate chips in a bowl and heat in 30 second intervals, stirring in between until chocolate is melted. Dip the truffles in the melted chocolate and place back on the cookie sheet and then put back in freezer to harden for 10 more minutes.

Shortbread Tea Cookies

Ingredients:

1 cup all-purpose flour
1/2 cup powdered sugar
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 cup butter, room
temperature
1 tsp. vanilla

Filling options:

Jam
Lemon curd
Chocolate mousse

Directions:

In a large bowl, whisk the flour, powdered sugar and salt. Add the butter and vanilla and mix until combined and the dough comes together. Divide the dough in half and form it into 2 logs, 7 to 8-inches long.

Place the dough in the center of a large piece of parchment or wax paper. Fold the parchment in half over the dough. Then, hold the bottom half of the paper and with your other hand press along the length of dough log to even it out.

Roll the dough into the parchment, firmly twist the ends and tie it to keep it secure. Refrigerate the dough for 1 to 2 hours. When the dough is firm, preheat the oven to 350°F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Slice the chilled shortbread cookies into 1/4-inch rounds and place them on the baking sheet, about 2 inches apart. Bake for 12 to 13 minutes; transfer to a rack to cool completely.

Spoon or pipe a layer of your chosen topping onto each cookie with the option to top with a fresh fruit. Dust the shortbread tops with powdered sugar just before serving.

Other Ideas:

Mini Cupcakes

Chocolate Dipped Strawberries

Mini Bundt Cakes

Macarons

Cookies

Cake Balls



Clotted Cream

Ingredients:

- 3 cups heavy cream (not ultra-pasteurized, you want at least 30% fat content)
- 2 tbsp. unsalted butter

Directions:

Put cream and butter into a medium-sized heavy bottom saucepan and bring to a gentle boil. Cook the mixture, stirring often with a rubber spatula so the cream does not scorch, until it has reduced by about 1/3. This will take a while, about 30 minutes.

Pour the mixture into a shallow baking dish and refrigerate overnight. Transfer cream into a small jar for storage. Store in the refrigerator. It will last for four days.

*If you can't find the right cream or it doesn't turn out for you, the cheesecake filling is a delicious alternative!

Second Tier

SCONES, CREAM AND JAM

Scones

Ingredients:

3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
2 tbsp. plus 2 tsp. baking powder
Pinch of salt
7 tbsp. cold butter, cut into small pieces
1/2 cup sugar
2 eggs
3/4 cup buttermilk

Directions:

Mix the flour, baking powder, pinch of salt, butter and sugar together in a large bowl until crumbly.

In a separate small mixing bowl, whisk eggs and buttermilk together. Stir the liquid into the crumb mixture. Continue to gently knead the dough by hand just until smooth. Do not over knead the scones, as this could make the scones a bit tough and bready, instead of flaky and tender.

Remove the dough from the bowl onto a clean countertop lightly dusted with flour. Lightly dust the top and then flatten to a 1-inch thickness and cover. Leave to rest for 30 minutes in the refrigerator.

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Remove the scone dough from the refrigerator and cut to the desired shape using a round (or other shape) biscuit cutter. Option: Add egg wash to the top of the scones with a pastry brush.

Bake on baking sheets for around 12 to 15 minutes, give or take depending on your cutter size, or until light golden brown. Leave at least 1 1/2 inch of space between each scone before baking. Cool on a wire rack.



Third Tier

TEA SANDWICHES

- Cucumber and cream cheese with dill on white bread
- Egg salad on croissants
- Smoked salmon, cream cheese with dill on rye bread
- Ham and Gruyère cheese with Dijon on white bread
- Chicken salad on brioche roll
- Sliced avocado and tomato with a pinch of salt on white bread
- Pimento cheese spread on white bread
- Roast beef with horseradish on a French roll
- Brie and apple with honey on white bread
- Blue cheese, pear and walnut with honey on white bread
- Sun-dried tomato and mozzarella on ciabatta
- Pesto, mozzarella, red onion and tomato on ciabatta
- Fresh strawberries and strawberry cream cheese on white bread
- Cooked asparagus tips and cream cheese with a drizzle of lemon juice on white bread
- Crab salad and sliced avocado on white bread
- Pesto chicken, halved grape tomatoes and sliced avocado on baguette rounds
- Peanut butter, bacon and sliced banana on white bread
- Prosciutto, pears with fig jam on baguette
- Chicken, sliced avocado, diced tomato and sprouts on ciabatta
- Salami, ham, white cheddar with mayonnaise on white bread



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