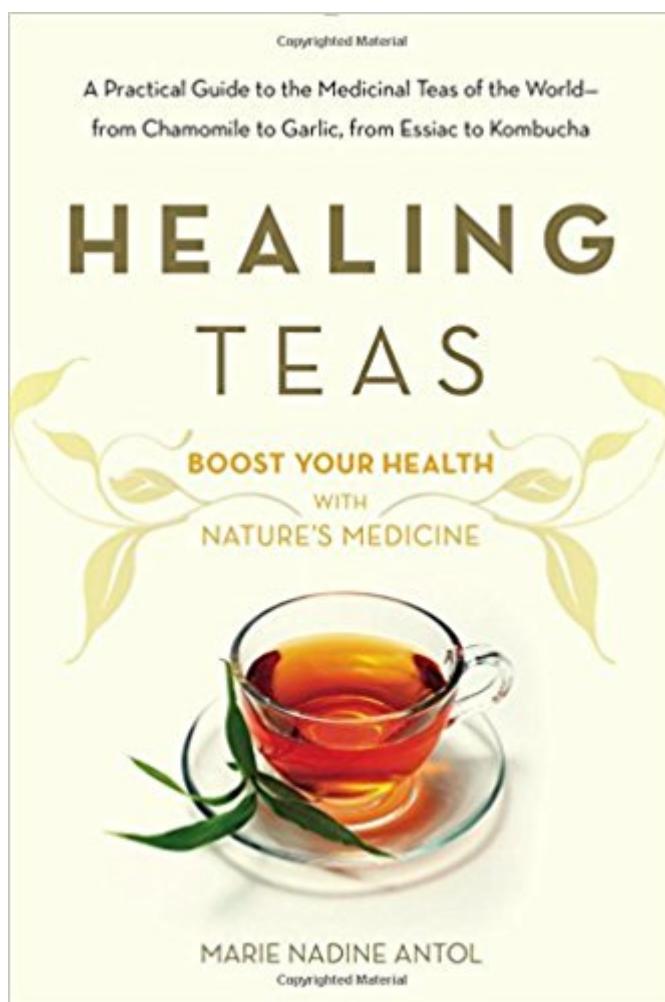


The book was found

Healing Teas: A Practical Guide To The Medicinal Teas Of The World -- From Chamomile To Garlic, From Essiac To Kombucha



Synopsis

A complete guide to medicinal teas from around the world and their amazing healing powers. For thousands of years, cultures throughout the world have known the healing power of teas. Tea has been used as a holistic treatment for a host of illnesses, from arthritis to migraines, and is a time-tested all natural path to overall health and wellness. Healing Teas is a complete, easy-to-follow and informative guide, blending together proper methods of preparing teas with the latest scientific research into their homeopathic qualities. Healing Teas also provides a unique A-Z guide to herbs, individual brews, and home remedies. From essiac to kombucha, chamomile to garlic, learn to prepare teas from around the world and maximize your health.

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Customer Reviews

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS I AM DEEPLY INDEBTED to the following people for sharing their expertise on various healing tea protocols: First and foremost, I am most particularly grateful to Morgana, proprietress and guiding light of The Raven of Venice, California. She was my primary consultant on the American and European brewing herbs that comprise most of the healing teas in this book. Her vast knowledge of herbology, coupled with her long experience in dispensing the very finest of brewing herbs through her shop, made her counsel invaluable. Morgana not only read the manuscript with her expert eye, she provided some very real insight on a number of teas that I might have missed. This book is much, much richer than it would have been had she not been kind enough to give me so much time. Thanks also go to the staff members at the Ayurvedic Health Center of Pacific Palisades, California, for supplying me with so much information on East Indian

teas and the traditional healing herbs of India, and for a guided tour of their impressive facility. My experienced consultant on the centuries-old whole-body tonic teas of China was James Rea-Bailey, who dispenses knowledge and Chinese healing teas at the Tea Garden Herbal Emporium of Venice and West Hollywood, California. His willingness to take time to discuss these sustaining and health-promoting teas with me is very much appreciated. I appreciate, too, the efforts of David Porrello at Avery Publishing, who labored to make the measurements in this book consistent and accurate. PREFACE MY LOVE AFFAIR with tea began a very long time ago. I not only enjoy teas of all kinds, I appreciate their gentle effects. The earliest "treatment" my mother applied when one of us felt ill was a "nice cup of tea." She believed there was nothing a good brew couldn't fix. Considering everything I've discovered in the past twenty years, it seems as if mother was right. Many years ago, I became personally interested in the healing power of teas. At that time, my niece experienced a dramatic turnaround in her health through diet and herb teas. Nutrition's role in health was not being discussed much back in the early 70s. I began to wonder what else medical science might have missed. Thus began my lifelong investigation of natural medicinals. I have often wished for a book that included good basic information on healing teas. I've done a lot of research and have yet to find a single source that told me everything I needed to know. It's taken me a long time to piece everything together. In one way or another, in a purely personal "family" way, I've been "working" on this material for over twenty years now. My immediate family has benefited countless times from a combination of healing teas and modern medicine. All four of my adult children still call home for advice on natural medicinals whenever something goes wrong. I'm a grandmother now. My small Number One (and only) grandson has already benefited from sips of some of Gramma's healing brews. I hope you'll also benefit from what you'll learn in this book. To those of you seeking solid information on the healing teas, this book is the answer. Part I encompasses a history of teas, including traditional teas, herbal teas, and healing teas, plus a whole lot more. In Chapter 1, Traditional Sipping Teas, you'll learn about the first cup of tea—brewed 5,000 years ago by an Emperor of China—as well as the ancient and quite beautiful Japanese tea ceremony, and the extravagant high teas of British royalty. Although it's difficult to describe an appeal that's purely personal and necessarily subjective, I'll try to tell you what various teas taste like. From the traditional teas—like Earl Gray and English (or Irish) Breakfast—to the light and delicious herbal blends, I'll give you an inkling of what to expect with your first sip. If you're already a tea drinker, maybe you haven't yet sampled all the varieties available. If you

think you don't like tea, I'm betting that you just haven't hit on the right blend yet. Either way, this chapter may encourage you to try something new in the sipping teas. In Chapter 2, Traditional Healing Teas, I'll give you a look at the long history of healing teas, so ancient that their use predates recorded history, and show you how these time-tested medicinals can serve a useful place in your life. I'll walk you through old China and the Ayurvedic healing system of India. You'll look through a window into the past and see how the Greeks, Romans, and Middle Eastern peoples traditionally used healing teas. Then we'll trek on into medieval Europe and the British Isles before booking passage across the sea to Colonial America, which includes a glimpse into how the native American medicinals and old European remedies intermingled. Expect a side excursion down to South America. I'll even give you a look at the macrobiotic teas that have come to us from Japan. In Chapter 3, Healing Teas Today, you'll see how ancient and modern come together. Here's where you'll learn of the instances where science has validated the old beliefs. You probably already know that the science of compounding natural medicinals predates orthodox medicine by millennia. There are many, many pharmaceutical drugs in use today that originated in a steaming cup of healing tea. I'll tell you how the progression of events has brought us to the stage where we are today. You may be surprised to learn that today, alternative medical systems like herbology, homeopathy, chiropractic, apitherapy, and the time-tested Chinese and Ayurvedic methods of healing are slowly but surely being welcomed as complementary treatments that support allopathic (orthodox) medicine. It's no longer an either/or approach to healing. For example, in Hong Kong, the locals routinely visit health centers where allopathic and alternative practitioners work side by side. In mainland China, where the old ways long prevailed, Western medicine isn't the stepchild any longer. In this broad-based approach to health care, the watchword is "whatever works." Such treatment centers are springing up in many areas of the United States. If your area does not have a facility in which Eastern and Western medicine are friends, you can still take advantage of a bit of the ancient wisdom simply by using some of the healing teas you'll learn about in this book. You will also find various methods of preparing healing teas at home, including making infusions and decoctions, but we won't stop there. I'll also give you some of the old "receipts" for making everything from poultices to salves to sitz baths. In Chapter 4, Shopping for Healing Teas, I'll introduce and explain the terms that are used to describe the properties of various herbs. Once you know the jargon, you'll easily be able to match an herb with its action when you're standing in a store looking at boxes upon boxes of various dried herb parts. You'll also find some

general guidelines for buying everything from tea bags targeted for specific ailments, to the herbal blends designed to taste good while they soothe and relax, to the dried herb parts you'll need to blend and brew your own remedies. I'll tell you what to look for and what to watch out for when making your selections. I'll introduce you to some preblended medicinal teas that have been prepared according to the ancient formulas, as well as some up-to-the-minute blends. I'll also tell you the many advantages of using the whole herbs instead of extracted components. And, just in case you're really interested in making teas from scratch, Chapter 5, The ABCs of Herb Cultivation, will show you how to start a garden that will produce a bumper crop of the "fixings" for your own healing teas. This chapter provides a general overview on everything from growing your own herbs to harvesting, drying, preparing, and storing nature's bounty. Part II is the heart of the book. Chapter 6, A Selection of Natural Medicinals for Brewing Healing Teas, includes an A to Z Trouble-Shooting Guide to help you identify the teas to use for specific conditions. Here you'll also learn about the natural pharmaceuticals you need to prepare selected healing teas, including one made from propolis, an ancient remedy brewed from a substance taken from the beehive. You'll learn what natural medicinal to use for what condition, what parts of the substance are used, the various ways of preparing a suitable home treatment with the specific medicinal, and how to employ the preparation for best results. If there are any cautions to be observed, I'll warn you in the material covering each individual medicinal. By the time you have reached Chapter 7, Conclusion, you will have all of the herbal basics under your belt. Now it will be up to you to discriminate the best times to use your knowledge of teas. Whether you choose a relaxing brew to lull you to sleep, or a powerful decoction to speed recovery, you will now know how to put the gentle power of healing teas to use for you and your family.

INTRODUCTION

THE WONDERFUL WORLD of tea is about to be opened unto you. If you already enjoy tea, I think you'll be fascinated by some little-known facts about your favorite beverage. If you have not yet been initiated into the pleasures of tea, perhaps this book will inspire you to take a taste. There is a simple beauty in the taking of tea. Somehow, relaxing with a cup of tea carries you away into the serenity of a bygone age. But there is more than beauty to taking tea; it can also be an act of healing. I believe in supporting the body with nutritive and natural-healing substances. Nowhere is it written that the ancient time-tested medicinals and therapies and today's allopathic protocols cannot benefit one another. I not only believe they can, but that they should. To dismiss healing systems that have survived for thousands of years doesn't make sense. These ancient protocols have lasted for just one reason. They work. I personally became interested in the quite extraordinary

power the body has to heal itself—especially when it is adequately supported—almost a quarter of a century ago. Here's how it happened. In 1972, my sister—the harried mother of six daughters all under fifteen years of age—sent her eldest daughter, Shelley, to me. I was working at home, had the time and inclination, and my sister was overburdened caring for her large family, which included a handicapped child and a baby. She was afraid she wouldn't be able to give Shelley the amount of attention she needed. Shelley had been suffering from an unexplained and quite frightening loss of weight. In spite of wanting to eat, she had no appetite and couldn't eat. Her personality changed. Normally, "mother" helper, she fought and squabbled with her sisters. She was morose and had severe mood swings. Most frightening of all, she was wobbly on her feet and was constantly blinking and rubbing her eyes because her vision blurred. Here's where medical science stepped in. Although Shelley had all the classic symptoms, it took a six-hour glucose tolerance test to confirm a diagnosis of hypoglycemia, or low blood sugar. Hypoglycemia is caused by excess insulin circulating through the bloodstream. The condition can be caused by eating too little, or eating the wrong things, thereby triggering the pancreas to produce too much insulin. It can also occur when a diabetic takes (or is given) too much insulin. Shelley arrived at my home with a book—*Low Blood Sugar and You*—a definitive text on correcting hypoglycemia and bringing blood sugar into balance by purely dietary means. This is when I learned first-hand how spectacularly the body can heal itself when properly supported by natural means. I served Shelley high-protein mini-meals with an ounce or two of herb tea to wash them down. In the beginning, she needed coaxing because it was hard for her to eat. But, as her body began functioning better, she regained her appetite little-by-little. I was cooking three meals a day for my husband and four children, but I ate exactly the same foods I was serving Shelley. This grand body-normalizing program caused me to lose about ten pounds (happy day), while Shelley gradually gained back the almost twenty pounds she had lost. When I returned Shelley to her family, she was fully recovered and able to eat whatever she wished, within reason. The turnaround Shelley experienced was stunning. And it was all accomplished by the simplest and most natural means imaginable. Back then (1974), medical science wasn't saying much of anything about the nutritional needs of the body. I began to wonder what else medical professionals were missing. That was the beginning of my lifelong investigation of the natural healing substances employed by the ancients. Since that time, I have travelled throughout Europe and to the East, visiting, talking, sampling, experimenting, judging, and using teas that heal and other natural medicinals to support myself and my family through various illnesses. My niece Shelley eventually became a convert to the natural ways, but

she took a lot of convincing. She grew into a bright, beautiful—and stubborn—young woman. When she was pregnant with her first child, she began suffering from horrific migraine headaches. Because she didn't want to take anything that could potentially harm the child she was carrying, Shelley decided to tough it out. I recommended feverfew tea, but she scoffed at the notion that a simple little herb could be of help. I warned her that the effects of feverfew are cumulative and urged her to start taking the tea immediately as a preventive measure. Finally, in desperation, Shelley called me one day when she was in the midst of a particularly severe attack. She was ready to do “anything,” she said, to stop “these blasted blinding migraines from coming back.” We were living in different states by then, but I told her how to get started. I warned her, yet again, that this gentle tea takes time to work. She began regularly sipping feverfew tea, sweetened with a spoonful of honey. A few weeks later, Shelley called me again. She was jubilant! She hadn't suffered another migraine, she said, “in ever so long.” I rejoiced with her and told her to keep on sipping. She did, for a while. Then her baby was born, she got busy, and forgot about the tea. One day, she was going about her business when she began to feel the familiar tightening across her forehead. The residual effects of the feverfew had left her system. Shelley told me she began frantically rummaging through the bathroom medicine cabinet looking for something—anything—in the way of a pain reliever. It took many hours before the attack passed. Convinced, she went back to her feverfew tea. No more migraines. Then Shelley decided to run a little “scientific study” of her own. She wanted to find out for herself if what the scientists call the “placebo effect” was involved. In a true double-blind study, one group is given the active substance, while another group (the control) is given a placebo, or inert substance. No one knows who is taking the active substance, and a few people taking the placebo always report results. If certain people expect a pill to work, placebo or not, it will. Call it the power of suggestion. Shelley stopped taking feverfew tea. She wanted to find out if the tea was working for her because she expected it to work—which would mean she was under the influence of the placebo effect—or whether the tea was really warding off the migraines she had suffered for so long. Within weeks, she had her answer. She came down with a blinding migraine. This experience is what turned Shelley into a true believer. In the ensuing years, she has done a lot of research into the old ways. We compare notes now. I can't tell you how gratifying it is to me that she's found the healing teas of help now that she's raising a family of her own. Incidentally, my sister, who suffers from arthritis in both knees, also swears by feverfew. You'll learn all about it in Chapter 6, *A Selection of Natural Medicinals*. The healing teas exhibit such a wide range of properties that there's

one for just about every ailment under the sun. When my children were small, and even after they were grown, I turned first to propolis tea as a remedy for infections. Garnered from beehives, propolis is the most powerful natural antimicrobial on the planet. It is especially useful against a sore throat. Mahuang, an ancient Chinese herb known on this side of the ocean as ephedra (the forerunner of ephedrine compounds) is a marvellous decongestant. Ginger root sweetens a rolling stomach, calms nausea, and often prevents vomiting. Licorice gives ginger a pleasant boost. Angelica and valerian relieve pain. Chamomile is a mild sedative. Goldenseal, echinacea, and ginseng are strengthening herbs that support the defensive systems of the body. They are useful against all conditions. There are many more. In this book, you'll learn about those I consider the best of the bunch. Do be aware that healing is often a balancing act. It seems to me that modern medicine has reached a point where it's necessary to balance the beneficial action of some of the more potent drugs against the possibility of real injury due to their sometimes toxic effects. Although there doesn't seem any way around it, this precarious balance can put a patient in harm's way. By the same token, anyone with a modicum of common sense is faced with the same need for balanced health care. Knowing when to take advantage of modern medicine and when to practice a little self-care health-care is a real balancing act. The healing teas reviewed in this book can be of enormous help. They are not for indiscriminate use and must be taken with appropriately thoughtful and informed care. But, if they are used wisely, I believe healing teas can be as helpful to you and your family as they have been to me and mine.

Traditional Sipping Teas

ALTHOUGH COFFEE HAS COME to be the beverage of choice on this side of the ocean, more people around the world drink tea than any other beverage, except water. Entire populations that occupy vast areas of the planet—including Asia, India, Malaysia, the British Isles, the Middle Eastern countries, Africa, and all of the former Soviet Union—start their morning with a steaming cup of tea. In these countries, taking tea throughout the day is common and, in many households, the kettle is always simmering. Tea time is always a pleasant break, a time to socialize if you're with friends, a time to relax if you're alone. Whatever worry may arise, a hot "cuppa" is the answer for many people. Whether it's "tea for two" by the hearth or a high tea for twenty, there's an undeniable mystique surrounding the simple act of taking tea. The very act of brewing and serving tea to one special someone—or a group you want to impress—turns the interlude into a social occasion. Taking tea can be simple or sophisticated, romantic or urbane, cozy or formal. In many households, exotic tea blends have taken the place of wine. Where once a bottle of fine old wine was dusted off and decanted with pride, many modern sophisticates now take delight in offering a personally

selected tea to guests.

WHAT IS TEA? Generally speaking, tea is a beverage made by steeping leaves in boiling water. The common tea plant is the evergreen shrub *Camellia sinensis*. Traditionally, tea is prepared from its dried young leaves and leaf buds. Although China is credited with introducing tea to the world, the evergreen tea plant is native to southern China, Assam, Burma, and Cambodia. Assam is a tiny state northeast of India. You'll find it south of China and Bhutan, tucked between Burma and Pakistan. In any discussion of tea, Assam is important. The Assam variety of *Camellia sinensis* is a very important player in the world of tea. Although there are an infinite number of hybrids, the three main varieties of the tea plant are China, Assam, and Cambodia. For the moment, forget about the "tiny little tea leaves" of advertising fame and prepare for a surprise. Mature tea leaves range in size from one-and-a-half inches to an amazing ten inches in length. It's the young leaves that are harvested. In fact, no matter what the variety, the shoot plucked includes the two youngest tea leaves on the stem and a small bud. Because of the need to be so selective, tea is still harvested by hand. Only a trained eye can do this work. The China variation of *Camellia sinensis* is a many-stemmed bush that reaches a height of nine feet. This tea plant doesn't mind cold temperatures and has a very long lifespan. A healthy China tea bush keeps producing for around one hundred years. When the bush is grown in warmer climes, Darjeeling (India) and Sri Lanka, it's a real money-maker, sending forth tender new shoots twice yearly. It even produces full-flavored leaves in what is called the "second flush." Assam is the "tea tree." This variety of *Camellia sinensis* grows from twenty to sixty feet high. With expert pruning and regular plucking, it produces for forty years. Tea planters recognize five main subvarieties of Assam teas. For example, there are tender light leaves, less tender dark leaves, the hardy Manipuri (Indian) and Burma varieties, and the very large-leaved Lushai types, grown only in the Lushai hills between India and Burma. The golden-tipped teas produced by dark-leaved Assams during their second flush are considered particularly fine. The Cambodia variety is also a tree. It attains about sixteen feet in height, but is not a major factor in tea production. Cambodia varieties have mated and married with the other varieties of *Camellia sinensis* on their own. Unless you are a tea connoisseur, you may be surprised to learn that teas come to us today from such far-flung places as China, Formosa, Japan, India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Africa, New Guinea, Taiwan, South America, and Russia. Every single one of these teas is a variety of *Camellia sinensis*. If there is only one tea plant, and that's all there is, how is it that different teas have different tastes? It depends on how the leaves are treated after harvest.

PROCESSING TEA In spite of the number of countries growing tea and the many blends and brands available, there are only three basic types of *Camellia sinensis*: green, black, and

oolong. The difference is in the fermenting. As applied to tea, “fermented” does not signify that tea has been turned into an alcoholic beverage. The light fermentation process undergone by tea leaves refers instead to the enzymatic changes occurring during processing. Green tea is unfermented; oolong is partially fermented; and black tea is fully fermented. It is the processing that makes all the difference. And, as you will soon see, not much has changed over the centuries. Green tea is still the favorite in China, Taiwan, and Japan. In days of old, the freshly plucked leaves were heated in an iron pan for a few minutes to “wither” them, thereby reducing the moisture content. When the leaves turned yellow from the heat, they were taken off the fire, cooled slightly, rolled by hand, and pan-roasted again and again, turning first an olive green shade and finally developing a greenish-blue hue. At this point, the processing was complete and the green tea was ready for brewing. Green tea typically steeps into a mild, slightly bitter, pale greenish-yellow beverage. Oolong tea comes from a special variety of the China tea plant known as chesima. That is what gives oolong its unique flavor. Oolong brews are slightly bitter and can be brown or amber. The Chinese call these teas wu-lung, which translates to “black dragon.” These leaves are processed much the same as China black tea, but more lightly. If you are a fan of oolong, perhaps you particularly enjoy the faint hint of jasmine that is often added to this delightful leaf during processing. Black tea yields an amber-colored, full-flavored liquid without bitterness. Fully ninety percent of the international trade consists of black tea, in spite of the scads of varieties and blends of tea that abound. Both orange pekoe and pekoe are black teas. The term pek-ho is Chinese for “white hair” or “down” and refers to the golden-tipped Assam teas I told you about earlier. Orange pekoe is made from the very young top leaves and traditionally comes from India or Sri Lanka. Pekoe comes from India, Java, or Sri Lanka and is made from leaves even smaller than those characteristically used for orange pekoe. Another favorite tea that is as popular in the United States as it is in Great Britain, where it originated, is Earl Grey. The formula for this blend is said to have been given to the British earl by a Chinese mandarin. It may surprise you to learn that today there are nine Earl Gray blends, each distinctive, each just a bit different from all the others. Traditional Earl Grey, called Earl Grey Imperial, is a blend of three black teas. The perfume and distinctive taste come from the oil of bergamot that is added during processing. The bergamot tree (*Citrus bergamia*) produces a small citrus fruit. It is the rind that yields the oily essence used in Earl Grey tea. Of the breakfast teas, English Breakfast is probably the most requested. A blend of small-leaved Ceylon and Indian teas, it is one of the most popular blends in the United States. The rich malty taste of Irish Breakfast comes from the

Assam tea leaves of this famed region of India. Those who prefer a heartier brew order Irish Breakfast. Turning tea leaves into black tea remains a lengthy process. Here's how the ancients did it. Then as now, the leaves were plucked by hand on a clear day after the dew had dried. The harvest was then laid out in a single layer and exposed to sunlight and air for at least an hour. Next, the leaves were lightly rolled by hand, bruising them and causing a red color to develop. Then they were "withered" in an iron pan, cooled, rolled, and pan-roasted several more times. The final step consisted of further drying. Centuries ago, the leaves were layered in a basket and toasted over a charcoal fire. When cool, the leaves were ready for brewing. Today, about the only part of tea processing that's still done by hand is the plucking. All the rest—from fermenting to air-drying to withering to rolling to the final roasting—has been mechanized. Once drying is complete, the tea is still not ready to go to market. Remember, there's a big difference in the size of tea leaves, depending on the variety of the tea plant. For example, it takes about 2,000 freshly plucked China tea leaves to make up one pound. But 2,000 freshly harvested Assam leaves weigh in at around two pounds. The leaves must be cut or shredded into tiny particles of roughly uniform size. That's why, if you have your tea leaves read, you won't find one recognizable leaf in the bottom of your teacup. The shredding process also facilitates blending. According to the Lipton Tea Company, the famous "brisk" Lipton flavor that's been popular in the United States ever since Sir Thomas Lipton set up shop in 1898 comes from a blend of twenty to sixty quality tea varieties. Walk into a tea shop sometime where loose teas are dispensed by the ounce. You'll often find a bewildering variety of blended teas displayed in glass jars or large tins. Inhale deeply. The heady mingling of scents is almost intoxicating. You're sure to find a leaf to your taste.

THE COMPOSITION OF TEA

When freshly plucked, the tender tea shoot—two young leaves and a bud—is about 77 percent water and 23 percent solids. At least half of the solid matter, consisting mainly of crude fiber, won't dissolve in water. The soluble portion consists of amino acids, caffeine, sugars, vitamins, and organic acids. A brewed cup of tea contains a moderate amount of caffeine, volatile oils, tannin, and several B-complex vitamins. The flavor of tea is produced by its volatile (rapidly evaporating) oils, while the astringency and color come from the tannin. No matter what tea or blend you favor, it will take a full five minutes of steeping to develop full, rich flavor. Unless you add sugar and milk, a cup of tea contains only four calories. With the addition of a splash of milk and a lump of sugar, the calorie count will jump to about forty. In Great Britain, where most tea-drinkers sip six cups of milky sugared tea per day, tea consumption adds 240 calories to the average adult's daily diet. And, surprise, those six cups provide about

10 percent of the RDA for the B-complex vitamins. Did you ever wonder just how in the world the idea of dropping some leaves into hot water and drinking the result came about? It's rather odd, when you think of it. Actually, the custom of sipping tea began more than four thousand years ago in ancient China. **A WALK THROUGH HISTORY** The earliest recorded mention of tea as a beverage comes to us across the ages in the form of a Chinese scroll brushed in 350 A.D. by a scholar named Lu Yu. This old parchment is named *The Classic of Tea*. In this work, Lu Yu explains the cultivation, processing, and use of tea, then the national beverage of China. Blends were many, even so long ago. Lu Yu says there are "a thousand and ten thousand teas." This ancient scholar also reveals that the brewing of the very first cup of tea was an accident. It seems that in 2737 B.C., the Chinese Emperor Shen-Nung was boiling some water, a common method of purification even way back then, when some young leaves from a wild tea bush blew unnoticed into the pot. He covered the pot and put it to one side. When Shen-Nung poured the liquid into his cup, he noticed the pale amber color, sniffed the pleasing aroma, and finally took a sip. He found the taste of the steeped leaves very refreshing. Being ever anxious to please their Emperor, the members of the royal court began steeping tea leaves in their boiled drinking water as well. Following that small beginning, China had tea all to itself for around three thousand years. **The Japanese Tea Tradition** Buddhist monks introduced the pleasant practice of drinking tea to Japan around 800 A.D. and assisted in the early cultivation of tea bushes in that country. The Japanese called tea "the froth of Jade, the elixir of morality." Old pharmacopoeias indicate that for five hundred years, tea was believed to be a medicinal drink. During the fifth century, the Japanese raised tea-drinking to the status of a fine art. The Japanese tea ceremony, called *cha-no-yu*, is very elaborate and of great social and religious significance. The bitter green tea favored by many Japanese is whisked into a pale green froth with a special split bamboo instrument with many fine fronds. The tearoom, known as the *cha-shitsu*, is designed so that the participants must enter on their knees, thereby beginning the ritual with humility. The ceremony began as a social gathering of friends who drank tea while discussing the aesthetic merits of the elegant and typically spare Japanese art, beautifully brushed calligraphy, and artful flower arrangements. The display of art is usually placed in an alcove, known as the *toko-no-ma*. Often the tea utensils themselves, carefully selected by the tea master for their beauty, are objects of special praise and quiet appreciation. In the twelfth century, Zen monks sipped tea to keep awake during long meditation periods. They were unaware that the caffeine content was the stimulating factor, but it worked just the same. As time went on, the tea ceremony evolved into a part of a Zen ritual honoring the first patriarch, Bodhidharma. The tea ceremony underwent further refinement in the

sixteenth century court of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, a military dictator who ruled Japan. A member of Hideyoshi's court, Sen Rikyu, was considered a man of aesthetic nature. He was the courtier responsible for the wabi-style ceremony, still popular in Japan today. Wabi, which means "simplicity," "quiet," and "absence of ornament," remains the very embodiment of this gracious ritual. Wabi tea masters prefer simple utensils and strive for a serene atmosphere where nothing unpleasant is permitted to intrude. In Chado, The Japanese Way of Tea, author Soshitsu Sen describes the tea ceremony, which he calls "The Path to Serenity," in these words: In the practice of tea, a sanctuary is created where one can take solace in the tranquility of spirit. The utensils are carefully selected and, like the tearoom and garden path, they are cleansed; the writing of a man of virtue is hung in the tokonoma [alcove] and flowers picked that very morning are placed beneath it. The light is natural, but dim and diffused, casting no shadow, and the kettle simmers over the glowing charcoal embers. The setting thus created is conducive to reflection and introspection. Making tea for oneself in such a setting is sublime. Here, man, nature and the spirit are brought together through the preparation and drinking of tea. And so it is. If you have never enjoyed this beautifully serene way of experiencing the taking of tea, it will be worth your while to search out a Japanese tea garden where the old ceremony is still practiced. You'll be transported to another realm, another way of life, and come away refreshed, reflective, and just a little bit dreamy.

The Tea Traders

The use of tea spread gradually from all of Asia to the rest of the world. It was carried overland to Russia, but it was the sixteenth century explorers and traders of the Netherlands, France, Portugal, and Britain, with their flying clipper ships, who started the craze for tea in Europe when they brought some of the delicate leaves to their home countries. Incidentally, the seamen who drank tea suffered far less from amoebic dysentery, a huge problem back then, than did the sailors who drank brackish water right out of the water barrel. Undoubtedly, boiling the water for tea helped kill the "bugs" and effectively sterilized it. Very soon, the exotic oriental beverage the seafaring traders called "tasse" became a hit with the members of the royal court. It is said that England's Queen Elizabeth I so enjoyed tea that she took it with her morning meal, instead of the more customary ale. The royal physicians who watched over the health of King Louis XIV of France claimed that specially brewed tea soothed and relieved the King's royal headaches. However, taking tea was still a rarity. The custom of taking tea really took hold when Catherine of Portugal came to London to marry Charles II in 1662. Her dowry included the port of Tangier, which became the tip of the British Empire in Africa, and the island of Bombay, which Charles promptly leased to the newly founded East India Company for 10 pounds sterling per year.

Catherine brought something else with her that has become one of the enduring symbols of British life: a chest of her favorite drink—tea. As the craze for tea grew, the trade between the British Isles and China expanded dramatically. The British established trading centers in Canton and brokered all the tea that came into Europe. When the British East India Company, founded in 1715, lost its monopoly on tea in the mid-1800s, the Brits began to search for other sources. This was when India, still a part of the British Empire, went into the tea business. Shoots of the wild tea growing naturally in Assam began to be cultivated and the industry grew. When the first batch of Indian tea hit the market, it was an immediate success. The teas of Sri Lanka, formerly Ceylon, were—and are—considered particularly fine. By the way, the teas of Ceylon were so highly regarded, you'll still see Ceylon (not Sri Lanka) listed as the source on tea blends today. This large island at the tip of India originally produced coffee beans, not tea leaves. It wasn't until the coffee plantations of Ceylon fell prey to disease that the planters turned to tea. With India and Ceylon both producing fine teas, the British East India Company continued to be a strong factor in tea exports. Nonetheless, in spite of the success of the teas of India and Ceylon, China was still the major producer. In 1886, China exported 170 million pounds of tea to Britain. That was over half of the 300 million pounds the Chinese produced. India, the latecomer to the game, produced 90 million pounds. High Tea When royalty and the upper classes took to serving four o'clock tea, or "high tea," elaborate sets known as tea services came into being. A typical tea service of the 1800s was handmade of silver and included both tea and coffee pots, milk and cream pitchers, a pair of tea caddies, a sugar bowl with tongs, teaspoons and a small tray to lay them out on, a tea strainer, mote spoons (with tiny bowls and long skinny handles) used to clear leaves from the teapot's spout, and cups and saucers all arranged on a huge tray. The urn containing the hot water for brewing was placed on a separate stand. Because the urns were large, elaborate, and very heavy, most rested in a swinging cradle so that "milady" did not need to struggle to lift the weight when serving her guests. Ladies kept their very expensive supply of tea (and equally expensive sugar) under lock and key. By today's standards, the price paid for China tea in the mid-1600s topped out at around \$2,600 per pound. In fact, the cost of tea was equal to the prices nobles paid for gems and baubles for their ladies. One famous jewelry store in Edinburgh sold tea right alongside the precious jewels. Tea time also meant refreshments, of course. The typically rich high tea would include both "sweets" and "savouries." The menu might include tiny meat pies and sausages alongside dainty crustless sandwiches of cucumber and watercress, plus scones, fresh strawberries, a bowl of clotted cream, biscuits, lemon curd, petit fours, tarts, and small cakes.

of various flavors. Considering the price the nobles paid for tea, you might well wonder how the common folk were able to afford it. Although it was Queen Catherine who introduced tea to the court, the experts say smugglers were the ones who brought tea to the masses—not the fine brews royalty enjoyed, of course. The smugglers brought in tea, and unscrupulous merchants bought a bit on the sly. The merchants then adulterated the tea heavily with bark, leaves from other plants, and probably anything else they could get away with. It didn't take long before tea became the national drink of Great Britain. A family tea might consist of nothing more than bread and butter sandwiches, or a plate of toast and bowl of homemade jam, with the tea served by the mother of the house from a kettle on the stove. But, no matter how simple or elaborate the service, no one ever had to leave the tea table hungry.

The American Colonies

By the eighteenth century, tea was as popular in Britain as it was in the Far East. When British citizens emigrated to the New World, they brought tea cuttings with them, but the climate was inhospitable to the plants.

Nonetheless, the transplanted British settlers were accustomed to taking tea and were not prepared to give it up, so the leaves had to be transported by ship. In 1767, the British king levied a tax on tea. The colonists grumbled and protested without effect. Finally, in 1773, the "boys" got together and threw an entire shipment of precious tea into Boston harbor. Every school child knows that the royal tax on tea, which sparked the Boston Tea Party, was a contributing factor to the Revolutionary War. Tea contributed to the creation of the United States, and the United States, in turn, made contributions to the tea industry. Three innovations in tea service and tea packaging came into being in the United States. In the early 1900s, a New York tea merchant by the name of Thomas Sullivan packaged individual samples of his teas in small silk bags. His customers were enchanted with this easy way to brew a single cup of tea, and the first tea bags were born. Iced tea, a summer staple in many households today, was the inspiration of Richard Blechynden, who had a tea stand at the St. Louis Fair in 1904. Because the weather was hot and no one wanted a hot beverage, Blechynden poured freshly brewed tea over ice. It was an immediate sensation. Instant tea is an American invention, too; it was first marketed in 1948.

TEA FOR TASTE

Most traditional tea drinkers drink tea simply because they find the taste pleasing. In this country, the beverage of choice is usually coffee or tea. No one is born with a yen for coffee, tea, or alcoholic spirits. If you're a tea- or coffee- or wine-drinker, think back. I'll bet you made a face as you took your first sip. The delight we come to take in a particular libation grows over time. Tea, like coffee or wine, is an acquired taste.

In France and Italy, it's customary to give young people heavily watered-down wine with their supper. I have a friend who told me she grew up on sugared "coffee-milk." I had a similar introduction to tea. The first cup of tea I was allowed

was well-sugared and contained more milk than tea. It was my mother's English heritage, I suppose, that made tea the beverage of choice in our household. I take my tea "straight" now, but I'm sure it was that first sugary-milky sip that seduced me and started me on my lifelong love of tea. Today, I take a huge delight in sampling all sorts of teas. Tastes of the traditional sipping teas range from heavy and hearty, to smoky and rich, to bitter and sharp, to pale and light, almost sweet. If you're a coffee drinker, two teas—the traditional sipping tea Assam and an herbal tea blended of roasted grains—come to mind. Either can satisfy the most discriminating dyed-in-the-wool coffee hound. It's difficult to describe a taste, but there are certain words commonly used to describe a tea blend that conjure up a particular flavor. Table 1.1 reflects a selection of teas distributed by several tea companies. Take a look. If you don't drink tea, you might discover a blend that captures your imagination and decide to give it a try. If you already love tea, you might find the description of a mouth-watering blend that's new to you.

HERB TEAS

"Healing Teas" is perfect for the beginner interested in the benefits and uses of herbal teas. For the most part the book is laid out in an easy to read format. My only complaint is that the book does not have an in-depth list of ailments and their herbal remedies. Instead the book offers a four page table with some common ailments worded quite generally and then lists up to ten different plants that can potentially help. This generalization bothers me because shaking due to nervous tension is quite different than having a nerve block. Likewise, both conditions should be diagnosed and treated differently. However, the book describes these problems simply as: Nervous related problems. So, beware that "Healing Teas" is not intended to serve as a manual for curing your specific illnesses rather the book offers more general information. Despite this small discrepancy, "Healing Teas" offers excellent information, especially if you are a first time brewer of herbal teas. I have learned a significant amount of herbal tea history through this book, as well as helpful information on interesting herbs that I now incorporate into my diet. Overall, you won't go wrong with buying "Healing Teas". This book will make a fine addition to your health library.

A really cool tea book. I intend to dribble a lot of amber dots on it (inadvertently!) over time.

I like it provides a unique A-Z guide to herbs, visual brews and home remedies.

This book is very educating :) I am so grateful to have this knowledge so I can start really taking

control of my tea drinking and to start growing my own herbs and using them medicinally!

Great book to better understand various teas and herbs. Great references provided, as well as other resources. Well recommended! Very resourceful.

very informational

informative will be great to have as a reference

Useful book!

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