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A Worldwide Vegetarian Journey to Discover the Foods That Nourish America's Immigrant Soul.

April 2022

ANOTHER CUP OF TEA:

Black Cherry Iced Tea

***Chai* Ice Cream**

Chewy Red Rice Steamed in Tea with Dried Berries

Mustard with Tea

Pears and Dried Fruits Poached in Assam Tea

Puffed Pastry Tart with *Chai* Custard Sauce

My beverage of choice is tea and seeking out a tea merchant/importer was probably the most difficult part of my exploration of the varieties of taste experiences which this ancient beverage can present. Once I found a reliable source of teas and tea blends, we explored and enjoyed; we created our own blends; and we started enjoying culinary forays. Tea is more than a wake-me-up and afternoon pick-me up.

Tea is not as complicated as some would have you think. There are really only four basic teas—fully oxidized and fully withered black; partially oxidized oolong or yellow tea; green, whose detoxifying properties have made it one of the more important foods of our generation; and white tea, the expensive, exotic, and least processed tea group.



A most important first step is to forget about tea bags. Loose-leaf teas are generally fresher and far more flexible when exploring culinary uses for tea and when creating your own blended tea mixtures. For example, my morning tea is a combination of three other tea blends: English Breakfast, a complex blend of tea usually exclusive to each tea merchant and a staple in most kitchens and hotels; a strong, full-bodied Scottish breakfast-style blend that is particularly welcome on a cold morning; an iced tea blend that adds lightness and a citrusy note; and an organic, Ceylon-grown green tea. This is a full-bodied blend which supports the cream I like in my morning cup. It took some experimentation to fill my tea cup and start my day just right. My tea company supplies a truly encyclopedic catalog that was a wealth of information both about the tea or tea blend, the country of origin, and the sensory experience. This catalog education was extremely useful as I began to explore how to use tea as a culinary ingredient.

The plant that yields these flavorful, rejuvenating leaves that we steep to create the golden brew is said to have originated in either China or at the base of the Himalayan Mountains in the Assam region of India. They were chewed for the caffeine burst and as time passed, a more sophisticated approach came into being as leaves met boiling water. Statistics suggest that by the 1500s more than fifty percent of the world's inhabitants were drinking tea as a safe alternative to often unsafe, unboiled drinking water sources. It wasn't until the 1700s that the pleasure of tea reached Great Britain, France, and The Netherlands.

There are a few basics but no tea ceremony is required!! For the longest possible shelf life, always store your loose-leaf tea in tins with tight fitting lids and refresh your



supply on a regular schedule. I recommend a classic Brown Betty teapot for brewing tea although I started my “grown-up” life with a bright yellow, single-cup tea pot that my grandmother fished out of the back of her cupboard to send me off to my first apartment, a pot I still have. The terracotta clay Brown Betty pot with its traditional manganese brown glaze holds heat well. Fill your tea pot with non-chlorinated boiling water and allow the clay pot to warm through. Pour the water out and add your loose-leaf tea and fresh, boiling non-chlorinated water. Cover with a tea cozy or a kitchen towel and allow to steep for at least 5 minutes. You’ll soon learn your own strength preferences. For some culinary purposes, like a vegetarian soup base, you will want the resultant tea to be stronger than if you are just stopping for a quick “cuppa.”

A ground or powdered tea is one of the most basic and convenient culinary forms. I grind loose-leaf tea in a coffee or seed grinder that is used only for teas so that there is no flavor contamination. I add a favorite *oolong* tea to mayonnaise, I add a pinch or two of smoky *Lapsang Souchong* to black bean and lentil soups, I add finely ground *Assam*, my favorite afternoon tea, to my wild rice salad or to a simple *pilaf*. I make a *Darjeeling* tea-infused vinegar with which I make a *vinaigrette* that is knock-dead perfect over a fruit salad.

One more note, if you are planning to introduce the flavor of tea to alcohol or fruit juices, do not heat the alcohol or fruit juice. Add the tea to cold liquid and allow for a long flavoring period.

These recipes are literally a beginning, just a step down the adventurous road that tea, as a culinary ingredient, can take you . . . after your breakfast tea has brought you to that calm awareness.

BLACK CHERRY ICED TEA

TPT - 1 hour and 4 minutes;
1 hour = refrigeration period

I brew a whole pot of my complex morning blend and that which is not consumed “to face the day” is strained and refrigerated. In addition to a mid-afternoon glass of iced tea, I use that refrigerated tea for rehydrating dried fruits and for drinks like this very flavorful pick-me-up. A splash of cream makes this very special indeed.

4 cups brewed tea
1/4 teaspoon unsweetened cocoa powder
Pinch ground cinnamon

1/2 cup black cherry juice*

In a carafe or pitcher, combine tea, cocoa powder, and cinnamon. Stir. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour.

Strain tea to remove any tea leaf debris or clumped cocoa powder. Turn into a clean pitcher.

Add black cherry juice. Stir.

Serve very cold with a splash of cream, if desired.



Yields 4 servings

Notes: *Organic black cherry juice is available in natural food stores and in the natural food sections of most grocery stores.

This recipe can be doubled, when required.

1/4 SERVING – PROTEIN = 1.0 g.; FAT = 0.03 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 27.1 g.;
CALORIES = 111; CALORIES FROM FAT = 2%

CHAI ICE CREAM

TPT - 16 hours and 12 minutes;
8 hours = flavor development period;
8 hours = freezing period

This ice cream flavor uses my honey-vanilla ice cream and adds a layer of flavor that makes it a perfect accompaniment to an Indian or Pakistani menu. A little extra protein is always welcome when the menu is South Asian.

2/3 cup fat-free sweetened condensed milk
1/4 cup fat free pasteurized eggs (the equivalent of 1 egg)
1/4 cup honey, of choice
2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract

1 tablespoon *chai* tea leaves

1 cup heavy whipping cream

Honey, for garnish

Fresh strawberries, for garnish, if desired



In a large Pyrex measuring cup, combine sweetened condensed milk, pasteurized eggs, honey, and vanilla extract. Stir to mix well.

Add *chai* tea leaves. Stir well. Refrigerate for 8 hours, or overnight to allow the tea leaves to flavor the ice cream base.

Prepare a **7 x 3 x 2-inch non-stick-coated loaf pan** by placing it in the freezer until required.

Next morning, pour the base mixture through a fine sieve into a mixing bowl. Discard tea leaves.

Using an electric mixer fitted with *chilled* beaters or by hand, using a *chilled* wire whisk, beat heavy cream in a *chilled* bowl until stiff. Set aside. *Whisk-fold* stiffly whipped cream *gently*, but *thoroughly*, into honey–milk mixture.

Pour mixture into chilled loaf pan. Spread evenly. Cover tightly with aluminum foil. Freeze overnight or until firm—about 8 hours.

Either scoop ice cream from pan to serve or remove entire block of ice cream from pan and slice.

Garnish plated servings with a drizzle of honey and a fresh strawberry, if desired. Leftovers should be returned to the freezer, tightly covered.

Yields about eight 1/2-cup servings

Note: This recipe is easily doubled, when required. Use a 9 x 5 x 3-inch non-stick-coated loaf pan.

1/8 SERVING (i. e., per 1/2 cupful) –
PROTEIN = 2.2 g.; FAT = 9.8 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 21.6 g.;
CALORIES = 181; CALORIES FROM FAT = 49%

CHEWY RED RICE STEAMED IN TEA WITH DRIED BERRIES

TPT – 56 minutes

So you go to your pantry for rice . . . how many varieties do you have on hand? There are short-grained, medium-grained, and long-grained; there are glutinous and non-glutinous; some are aromatic; and besides the white rice with which we all familiar, rice can be golden, black, brown, and red. Red rice is an aromatic whole grain rice, a semi-hulled variety with a honey-red bran. The color is due to the excess anthocyanin in the hull. We enjoy its nutty flavor and its chewiness. The Bhutanese grow a medium-grain red variety which is readily available online. Bangladeshi Balam, a small red variety, and a long-grain variety from Thailand are also often available. The Japanese claim four different red varieties—Akamura, Benisarasa, Soujy Akamai, and Toukon. You might also find Sri Lankan Red Cargo Rice or Kerala Matta rice or a red rice variety, Camargue red rice, from the Camargue region of France.

Wehani rice, named for Wendell Lundberg and his four sons of Lundberg Family Farms, i. e, Wendell, Eldon, Harlan, Homer, and Albert, is really a brown rice variety with a rusty brown outer layer. It was developed in the United States in the second half of the twentieth century. As the rice kernel cooks it swells and the bran layer splits creating an appearance similar to that of cooked wild rice.

1 1/4 cups boiling water

1 tablespoon strong black Scottish or Irish breakfast tea blend, or milder Oolong tea, leaves, if preferred

1/2 cup red rice or Wehani rice—rinsed several times with cold water

1/4 cup dried cherries or dried cranberries, as preferred

1 tablespoon butter

2 scallions—both white and green portions—trimmed, well-rinsed, and thinly sliced

In a measuring cup, combine *boiling* water and tea leaves. Allow to steep for 10 minutes. Pour through a fine strainer into a saucepan. Set over *LOW* heat.

Add rice and dried cherries or cranberries. Stir. Cover and allow to steam, undisturbed for 20-25 minutes, until all the tea has been absorbed and the rice and fruit are softened. *Add more water only if necessary.*

Add butter and scallion slices. Continue cooking, while stirring, until butter is melted. Turn into a heated serving bowl.

Garnish with chopped, *toasted* pecans before serving, if desired.

Yields 4 servings

1/4 SERVING – PROTEIN = 0.8 g.; FAT = 3.1 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 10.4 g.;
CALORIES = 70; CALORIES FROM FAT = 40%



MUSTARD WITH TEA

TPT - 48 hours and 8 minutes;
48 hours = flavor development period

Tea mellows and gives this mustard subtle dimension. I like to use a strong Irish or Scottish breakfast tea blend. An English breakfast blend is also a good choice. Try serving it with a cheese and fruit board and use as a sandwich spread instead of plain mustard. I frequently spread a portion of this on a dinner plate before plating a burger, a slice of mushroom loaf, scrambled eggs, or even cheese soufflé.

1 tablespoon Irish, Scottish, or English breakfast

blend loose-leaf tea leaves

1/4 cup boiling water

1/4 cup Dijon-style mustard with white wine

1 1/2 tablespoons Colman's dry mustard

2 teaspoons white wine

*[Our choice would be a Riesling or a Moscato.]**

1 teaspoon sugar

In a small bowl, steep tea leaves in *boiling* water for 5 minutes. Pour through a tea strainer into a mixing bowl.

Add *Dijon* mustard, dry mustard, and white wine to brewed tea. Using a wire whisk, blend thoroughly. Turn into a mustard crock or small jar. Refrigerate for 48 hours to allow for flavor development; time mellows the sharpness. Refrigerate leftovers.

Yields 8 tablespoonfuls



Notes: *I always keep small containers of leftover wine in the freezer for just such occasions as this.

This recipe can be doubled, when required.

1/24 SERVING (i. e., per teaspoonful) –
PROTEIN = 0.1 g.; FAT = 0.1 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 0.9 g.;
CALORIES = 5; CALORIES FROM FAT = 18%

PEARS AND DRIED FRUITS POACHED IN ASSAM TEA

TPT - 3 hours and 22 minutes;
3 hours = fruit rehydration and flavor development period

Assam teas are an afternoon joy during the cold winter months. Assam leaves brew to a mellow amber liquid that refreshes, yet soothes. Its soft, malty flavor is perfect for this dessert. I have used fresh pears but the tiny halves in the commercially-available canned product are very convenient for serving. This recipe provides dessert for two and then, the next afternoon, a tea treat for two.

1 1/2 teaspoons Assam tea leaves*

1 cup boiling water

1/4 cup sugar

**4 canned pear halves (about 1/2 can, i. e., 7 ounces)
juice-packed pear halves—well-drained**

1/4 cup dried cherries

8 sulfite-free dried apricot halves

2 whole cloves

One 2-inch strip of organic orange peel



Put tea leaves into a warmed teapot. Add *boiling* water, cover, and allow to steep for at least 10 minutes. Pour tea through a tea strainer into a saucepan. Discard leaves.

Place saucepan with tea over *MEDIUM* heat. Add sugar. Cook, stirring frequently until sugar is dissolved.

Add drained pear halves, dried cherries, dried apricot halves, cloves, and orange peel. *Reduce heat to LOW*. Cover and allow to simmer for about 8 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, remove pears, cherries, apricots, and orange peel to a shallow bowl.

Increase heat under syrup to *MEDIUM-HIGH* and boil syrup in saucepan until you have reduced it to about 3/4 cupful. Remove saucepan from heat and allow syrup to cool slightly. Remove and discard cloves. Pour the syrup over fruit. Refrigerate for at least 3 hours. Remove and discard orange peel.

Serve chilled with a dollop of whipped cream, if you wish.

Yields 4 servings

Notes: *Fine, estate-grown Assam teas are available from mail order firms. They vary in flavor and color according to where they have been grown.

This recipe can be doubled, when required.

1/4 SERVING – PROTEIN = 1.0 g.; FAT = 0.8 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 35.8 g.;
CALORIES = 146; CALORIES FROM FAT = 5%

PUFFED PASTRY TART WITH CHAI CUSTARD SAUCE

TPT - 2 hours and 34 minutes;
20 minutes = pastry resting period;
40 minutes = custard sauce cooling period

I remember when, as a child, I first learned to cook, my mother divided the plate into three sections and instructed, one is meat, two is starch, and three is vegetable. From the very start, before we even got to the real cooking part, I was prepared for a boring life of cooking for a family but I was so wrong. On occasion a light vegetable dinner is all you want but protein insurance can be the eggs or dairy in the dessert. Whipping up a simple custard sauce to serve over fruit or cakes is a wonderful surprise for dessert; the variation of the classic crème Anglaise in this dessert is even better. If you enjoy chai, this is a luscious way to have another cupful. The company from whom I buy my loose tea also has flavored tea mixtures like “crème brulee black dessert tea,” and “almond sugar cookie dessert tea,” both of which can add magic to a crème Anglaise.

1 sheet frozen puff pastry—defrosted but still chilled

3/4 cup light cream or half and half

6 tablespoons sugar

2 tablespoons vanilla loose leaf, chai tea mixture

3/4 cup fat-free pasteurized eggs (the equivalent of 3 eggs)

1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Prepare a baking sheet by lining it with culinary parchment paper.

Spread puff pastry out on a cool surface. Carefully trim one inch all the way around. Set strips aside briefly. Using a rolling pin, roll the pastry out into a thin square. Brush the edges with water. Place the trimmed strips around the sides of the square forming a ledge. Trim where necessary. Transfer pastry carefully to the parchment-lined baking sheet. Allow pastry to rest for about 20 minutes. Bake in preheated 400-degree F. oven for 15-20 minutes until puffed and lightly browned. Remove from oven and transfer to a serving plate, preferably square, or a board, if preferred. Set aside until ready to serve.



In a non-stick saucepan set over *LOW-MEDIUM* heat, combine cream, sugar, and tea leaves. Cook, stirring constantly, until sugar has dissolved. Remove from heat, cover, and allow the *chai* flavor to permeate the cream for 40 minutes. Set a tea strainer over a clean saucepan. Strain tea leaves from cream. Return infused cream to *LOW-MEDIUM* heat.

Add pasteurized eggs. Using a wire whisk, stir constantly until sauce thickens.

Add vanilla extract. Whisk it into the sauce base. Refrigerate for at least 40 minutes until sauce is cool.

Spoon cooled custard sauce over baked pastry tart, tucking it up against the puffed edge. Decorate with swirls or a chevron.

Serve at once. Slice with a serrated knife.

Yields 6 servings

1/6 SERVING – PROTEIN = 6.9 g.; FAT = 13.8 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 30.8 g.;
CALORIES = 279; CALORIES FROM FAT = 45%

That's why I ask, "another cup of tea?"

*Next month we'll explore the options and exceptional nutritional contributions
of yellow vegetables and fruits
and ways that we can incorporate their goodness into our menu plans.*

Please drop by,

Judy

Please note that all food value calculations are approximate and not the result of chemical analysis.

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