



time for tea

BY LISA BOALT RICHARDSON

Growing up in the South, I always loved tea but did not know much about it. All that changed in 1990 when my doctor ordered me on bed rest with my second pregnancy. Boredom quickly set in and I began to read some books on tea that I had picked up a few years earlier. The more I read about the world's second most popular beverage, the more I wanted to learn about it and the lifestyle that surrounds it. Drinking tea is more than just sipping a beverage. It is about slowing down and relaxing while also having a pick-me-up. Wonderful things can happen when we slow down

to sip some tea and share time with family and friends or simply choose to take a moment to ourselves.

My interest in tea turned into the dream of someday being able to have a tea business. That dream slowly became a reality. In 2000, I attended my first tea conference and soon after I was trained and certified by the Protocol School of Washington in tea and etiquette. I began teaching seminars and conducting cooking classes on tea. The response was overwhelming. It seemed there were many people interested and eager to learn more about tea.

Many Americans view tea as an English tradition but we were actually sipping tea before it ever touched English soil. In 1650, tea was brought to the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam, which is now New York

City. Tea was not available in England until 1657. Our infatuation with tea continued until the Revolutionary War when it became an icon of tyranny.

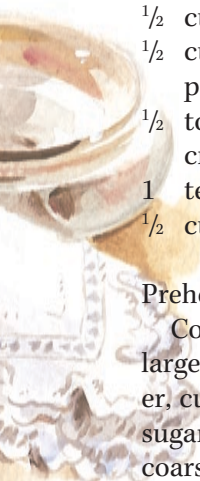
As people discover all of its good qualities, tea is growing in popularity again. All tea, whether black, oolong, green, or white, comes from the same plant—the *camellia sinensis*. Many studies have shown that tea is good for your health and has about a third less caffeine per cup than coffee. People often ask me what type of tea they should drink. My answer is always the same, "Drink what you love and drink it often."

If you are interested in knowing more about tea, contact Lisa Richardson at lisaknowstea.com or if you are looking for a great tearoom in the South, contact The Southern Association of Tea Businesses at teabiz.org.

recipes

CRANBERRY SCONES

Makes about 35 scones

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- 3 cups self-rising flour
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter cut into small pieces
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ cup heavy whipping cream
 - 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ cup dried cranberries

Preheat oven to 400°F.

Combine flour and sugar in a large bowl. Using a pastry blender, cut butter into the flour and sugar mixture until it resembles coarse meal. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup heavy whipping cream, vanilla, and dried cranberries. Stir until all ingredients are moistened. Add a little more heavy whipping cream if it seems too dry.

Turn out on a generously floured surface and knead 5 times, or until it all comes together. Be careful not to overwork the dough. Roll out with a rolling pin to $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch thickness and cut with a $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch

biscuit cutter. Place on ungreased cookie sheet.

Bake for 13 to 15 minutes, or until light golden brown. Be careful not to over bake. Serve with lemon curd or preserves.

APPLE WALDORF TEA SANDWICHES

Makes 56 tea sandwiches

- 1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 red apple, cored and finely chopped
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup walnuts, toasted and finely chopped
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup finely chopped celery
- 1 cup shredded sharp Cheddar cheese
- 28 slices firm white bread

Using an electric mixer, combine cream cheese, mayonnaise, and sugar together. Add apple, walnuts, celery, and cheese to mixture and stir until well combined. Spread onto a slice of white bread and top with slice of bread. Use a bread knife to cut off crust; cut into 4 pieces.

CHOCOLATE ALMOND CRESCENT COOKIES

Makes 48 cookies

- 1 (15-ounce) package refrigerated piecrusts
 - 1 cup ground almonds
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ cup confectioners' sugar
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon almond extract
 - 1 egg white
 - 2 (1-ounce) squares semi-sweet chocolate, melted
- Confectioners' sugar (optional)

Preheat oven to 425°F. Allow piecrust to sit at room temperature for 15 to 20 minutes.

In a small bowl combine almonds, confectioners' sugar, almond extract, egg white, and chocolate; blend well.

On a lightly floured surface, unroll piecrusts. Cut each crust into 24 wedges. Place $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon almond mixture at wide end of wedge. Roll up, starting at widest end of wedge. Place point side down on ungreased cookie sheet.

Bake for 10 to 14 minutes, or until light golden brown. Garnish with confectioners' sugar, if desired. 🌸

brewing instructions

There are many specialty stores and tearooms that carry good quality loose leaf tea. Tea has about a one-year shelf life and then starts to lose its flavor. It should be stored in a cool dark place in an airtight container.

- Use fresh, cold water from the tap or spring water.
- Warm the teapot with very hot water from the tap then discard that water.
- Measure the tea leaves carefully (according to

the instructions on the tea package) into your infuser. Put the infuser in the teapot.

- Heat the water until it reaches the correct temperature: generally, 160°F to 180°F for green and white tea, 190°F to 200°F for oolong and a full boil for black teas, herbal infusions, and fruit blends. Pour it over the leaves immediately and cover your teapot. Brew the tea according the directions on the package.
- After brewing, remove the leaves immediately.