



Time for Tea



Mini Fact:

Japanese artist Yoshu Chikanobu created this woodblock print of a tea ceremony in 1895.

You’ve probably never thought a lot about tea — iced tea, hot tea, chai tea, green tea, sweet tea — tea is everywhere! But you may not know that tea has been an important part of many cultures for thousands of years. The Mini Page goes on a tea discovery mission this week.

Who drinks tea?

People in Turkey drink more tea than those in any other country. In fact, after water, it’s the most popular drink in the world.

Usually tea is made by pouring hot water over the dried leaves of a plant, *Camellia sinensis*. This shrub grows in places such as India, parts of Africa and the Middle East, where the weather is hot and humid. Some people use tea in bags, while others use a **teaball**, a mesh ball that holds the leaves while the tea **steeps**, or brews.

Tea history

Early humans may have been imitating monkeys when they chewed on bundles of tea leaves. The leaves could also be boiled or steamed, then formed into balls and eaten with salt, oil, garlic, pork fat and dried fish.

As a drink, tea was first used in China, probably during the Shang dynasty between 1600 and 1046 BCE. At first, it was used as a medicine. Boiling the water for tea helped people avoid getting sick from dirty water sources. But soon people realized that tea helped them stay awake and improved their concentration.

The Chinese began distributing tea across their country and beyond and using it for trading purposes. In fact, for a time, bricks of tea were used as a **currency**, like money.

Spreading the love

The Chinese developed a serious and complicated process for brewing tea. Tea masters had to use specific types of fuel for heating the water and the right utensils for making and presenting the tea.

As tea spread to other countries, people developed their own traditions about preparing and serving tea, and today, special tea ceremonies still take place in Japan and other Asian countries.

Europeans catch on

In the 1600s, European travelers brought tea home from China. The Dutch were big fans, and soon the French and English wanted the exotic drink. But tea was expensive, so only the rich and royalty could afford it.

The British East India Company imported tea from China, but in the 1800s it began growing tea in India, which was ruled by Britain. By the end of that century, India was producing more tea than China.



A tea plantation in Munnar, Kerala, India.



photo courtesy Library of Congress

This painting by Nathaniel Currier was made in 1846. Some of the men who joined in the Boston Tea Party disguised themselves as Native Americans.

A famous tea party

In 1773, the British Parliament enacted the Tea Act, which allowed the East India Company to sell tea directly to the Colonists in North America. The British government collected a tax on tea sold in the New World, but not on tea sold in Great Britain.

Colonists were angry because they weren’t represented in Parliament and thought the Tea Act was unfair. So when ships arrived in Boston full of tea, people there stopped the shipment from being unloaded. Then, on Dec. 16, a group of Bostonians boarded one of the ships and dumped the cargo into Boston Harbor.

The British Parliament punished Boston for the tea party, and other Colonies protested in support of Massachusetts. Just over a year later, the Revolutionary War began.

Resources



On the Web:

- bit.ly/MPteaparty

At the library:

- “The Story of Tea” by Alex Woolf

Try ‘n’ Find

Words that remind us of tea are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:



BOSTON, BREW, BRICK, BUNDLE, CEREMONY, CHINA, CULTURE, CURRENCY, DRINK, EUROPE, IMPORT, JAPAN, MEDICINE, PARTY, PLANTATION, POPULAR, REVOLUTION, SHRUB, TEA, TURKEY, WATER.

G A Q R A L U P O P I W R A R
C E M E D I C I N E V E K N E
Y T B U N D L E L E V R U I T
E R U T L U C J N O U B Z H A
K C I R B O A O L G K R R C W
R Y X U Y P T U A C Z N O Y S
U M R T A S T R O P M I I P J
T H R N O I T A T N A L P R E
S A F B O E Y C N E R R U C D
P T E N S V Y N O M E R E C F

Cook’s Corner

Spice Snack Cake

You’ll need:

- 3/4 cup whole-wheat flour
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 2 1/2 tablespoons butter, cold
- 1/2 cup plain nonfat yogurt

What to do:

1. Mix flour, spices and baking soda in a medium-size bowl. Blend in butter with a fork until the mixture is crumbly.
2. Combine yogurt, egg, vanilla, honey and sugar in a large bowl. Using an electric mixer, beat ingredients until smooth. Add flour mixture and beat for another minute.
3. Stir in cranberry raisins.
4. Spray a loaf pan with cooking spray. Pour in batter. Bake in a preheated 350-degree oven for 30 minutes or until cake is done.

- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1/3 cup cranberry raisins



* You'll need an adult's help with this recipe.

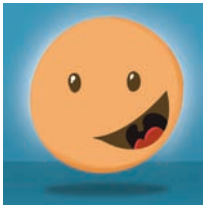
7 Little Words for Kids

Use the letters in the boxes to make a word with the same meaning as the clue. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of letters in the solution. Each letter combination can be used only once, but all letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.

1. cook in an oven (5) _____
2. instrument played with a bow (6) _____
3. creature with eight “arms” (7) _____
4. assist (4) _____
5. 60 seconds (6) _____
6. not very neat (5) _____
7. after-school assignments (8) _____

OL	IN	HE	AST
PUS	VI	HOME	MIN
RO	LP	MES	TO
WORK	UTE	OC	SY

Answers: roast, violin, octopus, help, minute, messy, homework.



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Mini Jokes



Elizabeth: What do you drink with the queen of England?
Catherine: Royal-tea!

Eco Note



The sun provides light and heat energy for life on Earth to flourish. Our planet lies about 93 million miles from the sun — just the right distance to make conditions suitable for life. Any farther away, and the planet would be frozen; any closer, and it would be too hot. Even with all those miles to travel, though, light takes just 490 seconds to travel from the sun to Earth.

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For later:

Plan a tea party with your classmates or family. Research tea ceremonies and create one of your own. Why do you think tea is so important to some cultures?

Teachers: For standards-based activities to accompany this feature, visit: bit.ly/MPstandards. And follow The Mini Page on Facebook!



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