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Caught up in the bustle of busy days, more and more corporate men and women are discovering the teatime break. Done well, as demonstrated by New

Zealander Yvonne Gill Davis, the break can be a refreshing event.

## TEA TIME

### The pause is surprisingly refreshing

Does the return to elegance in dressing herald the revival of the afternoon tea? We think so. It is a smart, sure way to relax. And, giving a smart little tea is a sure, inexpensive way to entertain.

Traditionally set from four to six in the afternoon, tea time falls easily into a busy schedule, allowing for a late, light supper.

Besides, we discovered, tea tasting is just as interesting as wine tasting and does not dull the senses. It leaves you refreshed, relaxed and still alert, still feeling elegant.

Caught up in the bustle-bustle of busy days, corporate men and women agree there is no relaxation in the mid-morning coffee break. The luncheon table has become merely an extension of the board meeting. The cocktail hour has evolved into nothing more than gulping a quick scotch and soda to the accompaniment of loud chatter and blaring music.

It is definitely time for the afternoon tea, and everyone's savoring the break. We are ready for a bit of refinement, for taking 20 minutes for introspection, to relax with a tidbit and a cup of tea.

AS YVONNE GILL-DAVIS filled a Toghini silver snail with fresh raspberries, she mused, "The tea should be revived because it will help formulate a period of time when people will sit and relax. If it's done as a traditional afternoon tea, as we are doing here, people have to sit down and enjoy it. You can't have tea on the run as you can a donut and a cup of coffee. The very presence of the tea table commands, 'Stop for a while and relax.'"

As she arranged the tea foods, Ms. Davis explained the etiquette of tea. "I am an afternoon tea fanatic," she said, adding "everything must be proper."

Afternoon tea begins with a savoury and ends with a sweet, she

said. A proper tea cloth and napkins must be used; and, if you have bone china, use it, she said. "It is the most elegant. One should always drink tea out of a fine bone china cup."

In the New Zealand farm country where Ms. Davis was raised, afternoon tea was the social entertainment of the day. The reputations of the best area cooks depended on their ability to make the lightest cream sponge cake filled with fruit and whipped cream.

But, no matter what, she said, the center of attention is always on the tea itself. "To make the best cup of tea, start with clean tea leaves," she instructed. "Tea should not be dusty and it is in tea bags. That makes the tea murky. Tea should be clear, and boiling water must be used. The tea must always be steeped in a clean china pot."

A selection of four choice teas is served at a proper tea," she continued. Among them, India, China, Russian and the usual English tea, which is a blend.

"There is as much to know and appreciate in tea flavours as there is in wine," she said. "There is as much difference in taste between an India and China tea as there is between a burgundy and a bordeaux wine."

FOODS served at afternoon tea should be small, she said. "A guest may sample one of each thing on the table, but it is considered bad manners to heap the plate."

Tea begins with a savoury food in the form of small sandwiches.

One type of sandwich is all that is needed and you may choose between several different fillings. Ms. Davis's sandwiches were made of a peppery watercress creamed with sweet butter which

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