



Teatime: Tradition makes a comeback

Teatime — that restful respite late in the afternoon — is making a definite comeback on the social scene. After playing second fiddle to the cocktail hour for a number of years, the ritual of afternoon tea is once again a popular activity.

Posh hotels all over the country are featuring afternoon tea in their lobbies and serving the guests such traditional fare as cucumber sandwiches, shortbread, scones with Devonshire cream and other assorted goodies.

Use your prettiest teacups and make the tea in a teapot to insure that the tea stays hot during the brewing period. Try different teas but always look for one that has a full-bodied taste, a bright, coppery appearance and pleasing aroma. Warm the teapot by rinsing it out with hot water. Then put the tea (one teabag or one teaspoon of tea) per cup of water in the pot and pour boiling water (about 5 1/2 ounces per serving) over the tea. If you like tea less strong, dilute it with boiling water after the brewing period. Serve with lemon slices or with milk (not cream) and sugar to taste.

ENGLISH BATH BUNS (makes about 20 buns)

4 1/2 cups unsifted all-purpose flour
1/2 cup sugar
1 tsp. salt
2 pkgs. active dry yeast

3/4 cup milk
1/2 cup water
1/2 cup butter or margarine
2 eggs (at room temperature)
1/2 tsp. almond extract
1 cup finely chopped mixed candied fruit
1 egg white
1 Tbsp. water
Sugar

In large mixing bowl, thoroughly mix 1 1/2 cups flour, sugar, salt and yeast.

In saucepan, combine milk, 1/2 cup water and butter; heat over low heat until very warm (120-130 degrees). Butter does not need to melt. Gradually add to dry ingredients and beat 2 minutes at medium speed of electric mixer, scraping bowl occasionally. Add eggs, almond extract and 1/2 cup flour. Beat at high speed 2 minutes, scraping bowl occasionally. Stir in enough additional flour with wooden spoon to make a soft dough. Mix in fruit. Turn out onto a lightly floured surface; knead until smooth and elastic, about 10 minutes. Place in a greased bowl, turning to grease top. Cover; let rise in a warm place, free from draft, until doubled in bulk, about 1 hour.

Punch dough down; turn out onto a lightly floured surface. Divide dough into 20 equal pieces. Shape into balls with floured hands. Place 1 inch apart on greased baking sheet. Flatten slightly. Cover; let

rise in a warm place, free from draft, until double in bulk, about 1 hour.

Bake in 350-degree oven for 12 minutes. Remove rolls from oven; brush with egg white mixed with 1 tablespoon water. Sprinkle with sugar. Return to oven and bake an additional 5 minutes or until done. Remove from baking sheet and cool on rack.

TEA SANDWICHES

Fillings:

Paper thin cucumber slices
Crisp watercress leaves
Small tomato slices (pat dry with paper toweling)

Spreads:

Anchovy butter: Mix 4 tablespoons softened butter or margarine with 1 tablespoon anchovy paste. Use in place of regular butter.

Cheese:

Blend a 3-oz. pkg. cream cheese at room temperature with 3 Tbsp. sour cream, 1/4 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce, 1/2 teaspoon dried parsley leaves and 1/4 teaspoon salt.

Assembly:

Remove crusts from thin slices of whole wheat or white bread. Use spread or softened butter. Add cucumber or watercress or tomato. Cover filling with second slice of bread. Cut in thirds or quarters. Cover with plastic wrap or damp paper toweling until ready to serve.

'Restructured' steaks are a great buy

If you've been beefing about the price of steak at your local supermarket, try strolling over to the frozen meat case, where it is possible to find two six-ounce USDA beef steaks for about \$2.50 — total.

These steaks are among the "restructured" meat products being developed to meet consumer preferences for lean, easy to prepare meats that are also economical, says Al Booren, a meat processing specialist at Michigan State University.

"Meat restructuring might sound sinister, but it is a way of processing lower-priced meat cuts into tender, juicy products acceptable to consumers," he explains.

Several restructuring methods have been developed to process meat that has been separated from fat and connective tissue. Flaked and formed meat products are made by shaving a piece of meat, usually chuck, into flakes and forming the cooked particles into a roll that passes through a slicer and emerges as individual, uniform steaks.

Sectioned and formed steaks are created with whole pieces of meat pressed together in the shape of a steak and bonded with meat protein extracts.

Booren says people who buy restructured beef steak and expect it to taste like naturally formed steak will be disappointed. But these products are tasty

and nutritious and are intermediate in price between hamburger and top sirloin.

Restructured beef is being sold in steak sandwiches by several fast food outlets, Booren notes, but these products have just begun to be marketed as grocery items. The average consumer does not buy frozen beef, so shoppers need to be informed that quality beef items are available in the frozen meats section.

In the past, consumers avoided frozen beef because it was often of lower

quality, but that is no longer the case, Booren says.

Restructured beef products are frozen to keep meat pieces together prior to cooking. Such restructured meats as ham and turkey rolls are cooked before merchandising and so do not need to be frozen.

Booren notes that the highest quality hams on the market are restructured products from which the seams of fat have been removed. Consumer acceptance of these hams and of restructured poultry products bodes well for the future of beef products, he says.

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