

2 UNIQUE



KELLI LEWTON

It's time for tea all over the world

While I was growing up, I shared a special ritual with my Irish grandmother, Ruth. Every other Saturday afternoon, we worked on a small craft project and ate lunch, which was followed by my favorite part of our afternoon visits—tea time.

She boiled the water in her copper kettle until it spouted a furious whistle. The hot water was then poured into a fine porcelain teapot decorated with beautiful roses that I know had to be hand painted. She then took two bags from her special tin and carefully placed them in the teapot, whispering with a knowing smile that we have to let them "bathe" for a bit.

After what seemed like a 20-minute bath (it was probably more like five minutes), she tipped the dainty pot with its slender spout over both our fancy cups whose roses matched that of the pot. The perfumed amber liquid would gently spill into our cups where we would both add a cloudy veil of milk and a dollop of sugar.

On about my 12th birthday, I traded my afternoon Saturday tea time for my Saturday swim team practices. I was reunited with tea six years ago when I turned in my coffee mug.

Tea seemed much different then I remembered it. Today there is a myriad of boxes to choose from: herbal, green, fruited and berryed. Many even tout medical claims on their packages. I started experimenting slowly, and now I have to admit, I'm a full-fledged, tea-bag-in-my-purse, "tea-totaler."

Tea has a legend

Legend has it that in 2737 A.D. the Emperor Chen-Nung was heating

Please see TEA, D2

Tea glossary

BLACK

- Darjeeling: An Indian tea that has an intense aroma and is very floral.
- Keemun: From China, a mild tea regularly consumed as a morning beverage.
- Assam: This tea has a malty flavor and is traditionally used in breakfast blends.
- Black Flavored or Scented Earl Grey: Flavored with Bergamot, a Candianese fruit.
- Lapsang Souchong: A black tea from China, Lapsang souchong has a smoky, almost tarry flavor, resulting from being processed over pine root fires.
- Fruit Flavors: Any base tea that has the addition of fruits or flowers.
- Oolong and Fennel Oolong: This style has several grades and is often known as the "best in the world".
- Wen Shan Pouchong: This unique tea has an exotic perfume aroma.

GREEN

- Gunpowder: This Chinese tea has a grassy fruit taste.
- Dragon Well: A delicate Chinese green tea, with a very nice aroma.
- Sencha: A Japanese green tea, pan-fried for a light color but rich taste.
- Genmaicha: This is a blended Sencha, with toasted and popped rice.

TISANES AND HERBALS

- Peppermint: This tea is popular hot or cold, blended with other teas and herbs, or alone for a cool flavor.
- Berry Teas: These teas are best when blended with other herbs, spices or teas. Popular flavors include raspberry, blueberry and strawberry.
- Hibiscus: This tea has a tangy flavor and is best blended with other fruit and spices.

NO CAFFEINE, PLEASE

- Yucha Mate: This tea is known for its ability to energize without caffeine. It is made from the leaves of an evergreen shrub plant from the rain forest.
- Chai: This Indian tea drink is made from black tea, various spices including cardamom, cinnamon, ginger, pepper and cloves. Mixed with milk, this drink can be served either hot or cold.
- Rooibos: A popular tea from Africa, it is served and brewed like regular tea.
- Bubble Tea: This tea is a real treat, blended with ice, sweetener and soy milk. The blend is shaken in a mottled shaker, creating a frothy, cold tea beverage.

Source: 1999 Tea Festival

LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Taste next week:

- Glorious grapes
- Spring parties

stressed? out

TURN OFF THE TV
TURN ON THE STOVE



TAMKE GRAVESTAFF ARTIST

BY PEGGY MARTINELLI-EXTERIS R.D.
AND MICHELE MACWILLIAMS
SPECIAL WRITERS

Have you heard of "Cartoon Foods?" These are products that resemble and are named after popular cartoon figures.

Turn on the TV between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. or any Saturday morning and you will see a plethora of advertising for these products. In this media-saturated world, television advertising shapes both our children's food choices and values, which alarms many adults.

April is Stress Awareness Month, and this week, April 24-30, is National Turn Off the TV Week. While turning off the TV can cause stress for those who love to watch it, perhaps April is a good time to give it a try. Instead of viewing a steady diet of cartoon food ads, why not teach our children about the joys and rewards of cooking?

Children and adults alike tend to enjoy food more when they take part in its preparation, so get the "potatoes" off the couch and into the kitchen! Ask them to help decide which dishes they would like to prepare.

Give them some choices: pizza, spaghetti or pork chops. Preparing dishes without running to the store will help with your stress level.

Make sure that you've blocked enough time for family cooking. Don't add this activity to an already hectic schedule unless you omit something else.

Turn on the radio or your favorite CD. Upbeat dance type music can keep everyone moving and in a good frame of mind.

Once dinner is prepared and it's time to eat, slow down and play relaxing music, so you won't eat as fast. Remind everyone to savor each bite and to remember to breathe during the meal. It aids with digestion.

Ban reading and TV viewing at the table and keep conversation light. Many digestive problems are caused by stress. Relaxing while eating helps reduce stress.

Eating like the pioneers

Here's an idea to help break the cartoon food habit: Ask your children to help you discover the kinds of food that kids ate before the era of television. With students learning American history in fourth and fifth grades, you'll be surprised at how much they know about this subject.

The Johnson family from Livonia recently made Johnny cakes as a special treat. The recipe is on the side of the Jiffy Corn Muffin Mix.

"My son, Ryan, had a crossword puzzle homework assignment where Johnny Cake was one of the answers," said Robin Johnson. "Making them was a tasty history lesson."

Picking strawberries at a u-pick farm is a fun spring outing. Making pies or jams from the harvest makes the experience even more rewarding.

Visiting a dairy or poultry farm can be fun. It is important to show our children that chicken isn't really something that comes in nuggets.

Friendship Bread, an Amish tradition, is a fun and delicious sweet dessert bread to bake and to give. A bit of starter is saved each time the recipe is made, to pass on to friends.

Kids love this bread because it is delicious, fun to make, fun to give to friends and very unique. It is also very unlike any cartoon food that they see advertised.

Destressing

Since April is Stress Awareness Month, it's a good time to talk about stress.

What helps you relax? Some people unwind with exer-

Please see STRESSED, D2

HOW TO CONTROL CRAVINGS FOR "CARTOON FOODS"

Some cartoon foods may be as nutritious as their non-cartoon counterparts, but most are more expensive.

Eating is and should be a pleasurable experience. Both parents and kids should feel good about what kids are eating.

CARTOON FOOD GUIDELINES:

- Ready-to-eat breakfast cereals are probably the most popular of the cartoon foods. Many are sugar frosted or contain artificial colors and flavors. Choose breakfast cereals with the most fiber and nutrients and the least amount of sugar and coloring. Set limits on how many times a week your child can eat the high sugar cereal or mix the cereal half and half with a non-sweetened variety. Watch how much sugar your child may be spooning from the sugar bowl. They may get more sugar per serving from a cereal they sweeten themselves than from a sugar-frosted one.
- Nothing beats home cooking, but kids are bombarded with advertising for canned spaghetti, boxed macaroni and cheese and frozen dinners. These products are high in sodium and fat and may be lower in high

quality protein than the homemade version. Be sure your child drinks a glass of milk with these meals and eats a piece of fruit, apple sauce or canned fruit for dessert. Choose frozen dinners that have less than 600 milligrams of sodium per serving. Ingredients are listed in descending order by weight.

Choose canned pasta that has meat or cheese as the first ingredient on the ingredient list. Better yet, use fun-shaped pastas like dinosaurs or teddy bears in your own homemade pasta dishes.

Snacks and desserts can be a part of your child's healthy diet, but proceed with caution if your child is eating these in lieu of eating whole grains, fruits, vegetables, milk, meat and other high quality protein foods.

Choose juice boxes that contain 100 percent juice. Choose dried fruits like raisins, dates and apricots rather than fruit roll-ups. Watch out for beverages or snacks that have artificial colors. Some "juice" beverages come in colors never seen in nature. When your kids ask for cartoon foods, what they truly really want is food that is fun.

A-a-a-h-h-h, remembering mom's great cooking

Do you remember the smell of your mother's pork roast, beef stew or barbecue ribs emanating from her kitchen?

Do you remember nipping up the stairs from the landing and bolting into the kitchen, asking "What's for dinner?"

If you do, and remember those magnificent dishes your mother used to make (or still does), we would like to hear from you for an article honoring moms on Mother's Day.

We welcome you to share your stories, and if you can, mom's favorite recipes with our readers. Tell us why dinner was, and is, an event

your family looks forward to, not only on holidays, but every day.

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In case we need to reach you, please include a phone number. And thank you for sharing your memories with us.

Give grits a try, you might like 'em

By PATSY LAFAYE
SPECIAL WRITER

The staple food thought to be eaten only below the Mason Dixon line is working its way to other parts of the country.

Grits, said to be passed on from the Native Americans to the settlers, are being found in homes and

restaurants across the U.S. They have been served at political fundraisers and in the White House. Grits were even featured on "Good Morning America." A lot of Southerners believe grits, catfish, and kudzu will slowly take over the world.

Please see GRITS, D2