

Trendy Teas

There's a more refined way to get our caffeine fix

BY LANA MINI
STAFF WRITER

Away from Oakland County's many corporate-owned coffee chains, where the atmosphere feels as hurried as its caffeine-craved customers, are its opposites.

There's a handful of independently owned, low-key tea houses where the customers slowly drink tea served in fine china. Fresh shepherd's pies and Devonshire cream scones are placed on tablecloths made of lace.

"It's just great to see these wonderful little houses thriving and serving good quality tea," said Pat Sagert, a certified tea etiquette consultant who occasionally hosts lectures at tea houses.

The teas are most often brewed fresh, rather than in typical tea bags that contain "tea dust" - which is just leftovers from whole tea.

The flavors vary from the popular strong English Breakfast to Chinese green tea touted for antioxidant properties to Oolong, which is called the "cham-pagne" of teas for its mild yet rich flavor.

Tea might be served with milk, sugar, cinnamon, berry infusions or as basic black.

Reservations at tea houses are often required, but walk-ins are welcomed. Scones are handmade and homemade.

On special occasions there may be a harpist or other musician.

Marsha Cameron who owns Sweet Afton Tea Room in Plymouth with her sister, Nancy Burton, said the tea house manages to thrive despite the influx of coffeehouses in the area.

Traditional tea houses are destination locations for those looking to slow-down and sip tea with friends.

"We try to work with the coffeehouses when we can," said Cameron whose attitude isn't competitive with the java.

"And of course we do

Sheila Tinnion, owner of Sheila Tea's on Fourth Street in Rochester, pours tea in her tea house that's decorated in true English charm.



Keep your eye on the cup and mind your manners

BY LANA MINI
STAFF WRITER

Do you know the proper way to enjoy tea? If not, there are tea experts to show the way.

Pat Sagert, founder of TeaThyme, a small metro-area herbal tea and sugar company, is also a certified tea etiquette consultant. She travels the area to discuss the subjects of tea history, etiquette and tea varieties.

Sagert recently visited Sheila Tea's in Rochester. While the attitude at Sheila Tea's is to relax and enjoy good compa-

ny, manners, of course, are never a bad thing.

"People come here to meet their friends and have a jolly good time," owner Sheila Tinnion said. "You won't be judged here and shouldn't feel uncomfortable."

Sagert sat at a single round table with a group of guests and discussed etiquette while actively enjoying their company during a tea.

About napkins, she said: "At lunch, smaller napkins should be opened under the table, on the side, and placed open on the lap."

Larger napkins are unfolded under the table also on the side. Then they are folded in half and placed on the lap.

When leaving the table with plans to return place the napkin in the middle of the chair.

When leaving the table permanently, place the napkin on the table on the left side of the place setting.

ON SIPPING:

Fill cup three-quarter full
When stirring sugar into glass do not clink cup with the spoon. Place the spoon in the middle of the cup to the bottom and gently move it

in a straight back and forth motion ... not in a circle.

When placing the spoon on the saucer, the handle should be pointed toward the drinker.

When sipping tea with in the presence of company look downward into the cup while it is held to your lips. Looking over your tea cup toward a guest seated across from you is uncouth.

THE CUP

When sipping and returning the cup to the table, the handle should be placed at 2 p.m.

EXTRAS

Don't dunk the tea bag up and down. Let it simmer. When your tea is strong enough, place the bag on the tiny saucer plate next to you.

There's controversy in any topic. Tea is no exception. Some say to pour the milk in the cup before the tea, others say pour milk last. If unsure, follow Queen Elizabeth's example who pours in the milk after the tea.

Lastly, tea time is supposed to be relaxing. Keep it stress-free.

Tea facts

AREA TEA HOUSES

Crazy Wisdom Tea Room, Ann Arbor
114 S. Main St. (734) 665-9468

Located on the second floor of
1200 N. Main St. Bookstore and Tea

Sheila Tea's, Rochester, N.Y.
Fourth St. (248) 601-0648

Townsend Hotel, Birmingham
100 Townsend; (248) 642-7900.

Reservations required.
Sweet Afton Tea Room,
Plymouth

450 Forest Ave.; (734) 454-0777

Victorian Rose, Rochester
118 W. Third St. (248) 652-8595

POPULAR TEAS

DARJEELING - Comes from
northwest India and is the

hottest of the Himalayan mountains at elevations of about 6000 feet. Perhaps the world's most sought after black tea. A brisk, flowery bouquet flavor

ENGLISH BREAKFAST black - English Breakfast tea is Keemun black tea from China. Some like a little bit of milk with it for morning wake up. A favorite for tea drinkers for centuries. There are many varieties of English Breakfast.

GREEN - Green tea comes from the same plant that produces black tea. The difference is that green tea leaves are not fermented but are dried before

PLEASE SEE FACTS, B2

PLEASE SEE TEA, B2

Family adds own ingredients to Polish Christmas Eve feast

BY SANDRA DALKA-PRYSBY
CORRESPONDENT

Christmas Eve has been a special night for more than 20 years for the Czerniewski family of Troy. "And it's all because of my husband, Don," says Barbara Czerniewski.

Although of Polish heritage on both sides of her family, the wife and mother of a grown daughter (Julie lives in Virginia) says she was used to a big family celebration on Christmas Day.

"But my husband's family, most of which live in Pittsburgh, has always followed the Polish custom of a special observance of the birth of Jesus on the night before Christmas. So we started

a new tradition a few years after we got married. Now Christmas Eve is a time for celebration at our house for our family, my cousins and their families, my aunt and my mother," she says.

Her mother, Bernice Engler, 83, who lives with the Czerniewskis, helps with the festive meal, which, she says, is different from the one her Polish mother prepared when she was a child.

"It was a custom to serve a meatless meal to commemorate the final day of fasting in preparation for Christmas," says Engler. "My mother made the dishes my father, also Polish, liked, which included boiled potatoes, three kinds of soup -

mushroom, pea and herring (which none of us kids liked!) and rye bread."

She adds that the mushrooms used in the soup were hand-picked by her older brothers earlier in the year and then preserved for use in this traditional Christmas Eve offering.

According to Engler, some Christmas Eve meals had only one main menu offering. "When I was 10 years old the Depression hit and my father lost his job. For many years potato soup was all we had," she said.

According to Polish custom, the Christmas Eve or Wigilia

PLEASE SEE POLISH, B3

POLISH RECIPES

TRADITIONAL MUSHROOM SOUP (ZUPA GRZYBOWA)

6 large dried mushrooms
1 cup fresh mushrooms, chopped
2 quarts vegetable stock
Oil or parsley to taste

Soak dried mushrooms overnight in water. Drain. In large pan, simmer dried and fresh mushrooms in vegetable stock for 1 hour. Remove mushrooms and cut into strips. Return to stock. Add oil or parsley. Serves 8.

MUSHROOM SUPREME

1 pound whole mushrooms
1 stick of butter, divided
2 beef bouillon cubes

1/2 cup hot water

2 tablespoons flour

1/2 cup cream

1/8 teaspoon salt

dash of pepper

1/2 cup bread crumbs

1/2 to 1 cup Parmesan cheese

Sauté mushrooms in 1/2 stick of butter. Transfer to a buttered casserole dish. Dissolve beef cubes in water. In small pan melt remaining butter and blend in flour. Add cream, salt, pepper and beef broth.

Pour liquid mixture over mushrooms. Mix bread crumbs and cheese together and sprinkle over top of mushrooms. Bake at 350° for 30 minutes. Serves 6-8.