

A Winter Wonderland Tea Party

What better way to ease a chill than with a warm tea to seep into a frozen body. A winter wonderland tea party was always a must around the holiday season.

The best type of tea to have at a winter wonderland party was spiced tea, as it offered a warmer taste than other teas. One common one was a spiced Christmas tea, which was Darjeeling tea flavoured with citrus peel, cinnamon, juniper berries and cloves. Multiple sweets were served at the tea. They included white chocolate and cranberry Florentines, spiced star cookies, and snow-topped coconut cake (see below).



A Fultz House Museum Volunteer Favorite

Many people enjoy a little something sweet with their tea, so why not a creamy, melt in your mouth coconut cake. This decadent cake is sure to appeal to all guests and is especially popular around Christmas time.

Begin by gathering your ingredients. They include:

- 3 tablespoons coconut cream
- 1 stick plus 5 tablespoons of unsalted butter
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup plus 2 tablespoons superfine sugar
- 3 eggs
- 1 cup of self-rising flour
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup shredded coconut
- grated peel of 1 un-waxed lime

For the icing, you will need:

- 1 cup of cream cheese
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup confectioners' icing sugar
- 1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lime juice
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup coconut curls

You will require two 8 inch round cake pans that have been greased. Preheat the oven to 350 °F

Soften coconut cream and then mix together with butter and sugar, beating until pale and fluffy. One at a time, beat in the eggs and then stir in the flour, folding it in. Stir in the lime peel and shredded coconut. Then pour the mixture into the cake pans, and distribute evenly. Bake for 20-25 minutes, or until golden brown.

To make the icing, beat the cream cheese, confectioners' sugar and lime juice together. Spread a little less than half of the icing on top of one of the cakes and place the other one gently on top. Then proceed to ice the top of the second cake. Garnish the cake with the coconut curls.

Tea Parties: Endless Possibilities

A Teddy Bear's Picnic

Looking for a fun way to keep the little ones interested for an hour or two? Why not take them on a teddy bear picnic. A teddy bear's picnic is a great way to get children involved in having an afternoon tea, and they can even reserve a special place at the party for their teddy bear!

The food at a teddy bear's picnic is based around what a bear might have eaten, like honey, and instead of a pot of tea, one might have iced tea. A common thirst quencher is a lemonade punch. The picnic might include gingerbread teddy bears, honey buns and grizzly bear bars.

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The above silver tea serving set is part of the Fultz House Museum collection.

The Tradition of Afternoon Tea

Why are so many people in love with the idea of having tea and a light snack in the afternoon? What quickly became a fad has evolved into a daily ritual that has been passed down from generation to generation.

It is said that the idea of afternoon tea was started by Anna, the 7th Duchess of Bedford, when she complained of having a “sinking feeling” in the mid to late afternoon. In the past, there were only two main meals, not three. There was breakfast, and a late dinner, usually served around 8 o’clock. The Duchess of Bedford decided to begin having a light snack. This snack consisted of a pot of tea and a small bite to eat, normally something sweet like trifles or a slice of cake.

Soon after, she began to invite friends to join her in her afternoon indulgence. After moving back to London, the Duchess continued with her afternoon snack, and eventually women across England became delighted by this new and exciting treat. Not long after, society deemed this practice appropriate and afternoon tea was permitted to be held in a public area, normally in a drawing room.

A Classic English Tea

A classic English tea consists of a lovely pot of Darjeeling tea, a variety of finger sandwiches, and some scones with homemade jam and whipped cream, topped off with a delicious butter cookie and a melt in your mouth piece of cake.

Finger sandwiches are a great way to start off a tea with. They are made from well-known ingredients such as ham and cheese, thinly sliced cucumber, smoked salmon and shrimp garnished with lemon and arugula.

An afternoon tea party needs to end on a sweet note. Butter cookies are an excellent choice for afternoon tea. Once the dough is made, the choice is up to the baker. Some may choose to roll the cookie in sugar before baking, while others add a drizzle of chocolate after the cookie is baked.



Anna, the 7th Duchess of Bedford

A Gentleman's Tea

A gentleman's tea was inspired by traditional gentleman's club, and was designed to hold an atmosphere of sophistication and masculinity. As the tea was designed to appeal to the palates of men, the focus was to serve savory foods with minimal sweets at the end. Men would often use their afternoon tea as a way to escape the stress of everyday life, reconnect and have a relaxing light meal with friends.

Since the meals were designed to appeal strictly towards a man's appetite, the meal would normally be served with a Yunnan tea, as it offered a salty, yet also savory taste. To begin their tea, the men would be served soft-cooked eggs paired with asparagus to dip, alongside toast topped with a delicious smoked mackerel pâté (see below). The tea was completed with scones, commonly served with cinnamon butter and a lovely piece of fruitcake to richen the taste buds.

