

History of Tea: A Timeline

2737 B.C. - The emperor of China discovers tea

593 A.D. - Tea was introduced to Japan

1589 - Europeans first learn of tea

1610 - Green tea is brought to Europe by the Dutch

1650-1700 - Tea parties became very popular among women of different social classes

1662 - A Portuguese Princess, Catherine of Braganza, introduced tea to the English

1680 - Tea is introduced to Scotland by the Duchess of York



The china cabinet as seen in the Fultz House Museum dining room.

Tea Time Etiquette of the Past

Tea guests were greeted with a polite greeting and handshake. Once guests were seated, they would arrange their personal belongings, such as a purse, on their lap or at the back of the chair. They would take the napkin from the table and lay it across their lap.

To begin the actual tea, the host would first serve their guests some tea. If the tea was to be sweetened, the sugar was placed in the cup before the tea was poured. They could also add lemon or milk. If a guest wanted lemon, it was to be put in the cup before the tea was poured. However, if a guest desired milk with their tea, they would add it after the tea was poured.

Savories were served first, followed by scones, and then some sweets. It was important to remember that throughout the tea, a guest was to eat with their fingers very neatly. There was also a specific way to eat a scone. First, the guest would cut the scone horizontally with a knife, and any jam or cream was placed on the side of the plate. Instead of covering half of the scone in jam or cream, the sauces were placed directly on each bite.



This tea set is on display in the Fultz House Museum.

A History on Afternoon Tea



This is a painting on display in the Fultz House Museum parlour of two women indulging in some afternoon tea.

FULTZ HOUSE MUSEUM

Afternoon Tea: The Origins



This tea set is on display in the dining room of the Fultz House Museum.

A Brief History on Tea

The history of tea is mostly based on legends. The most popular legend is that tea was first discovered in China in 2737 B.C. by the emperor of China. For the next several hundred years, tea was used solely for its herbal medicinal qualities. Then, during the Western Zhou Dynasty, tea was used as religious offerings. During the Han Dynasty (202B.C.-220A.D.), tea plants were limited, thus resulting in the drink used only for royalty and the wealthy, and its purposes were limited for health and taste.

Eventually, Japanese priests who had been travelling through China discovered tea, and brought it back to Japan. As in China, tea was only used by priests and the rich at its introduction in Japan. The sole purpose was medicinal. The emperor of Japan enjoyed tea so much that he had tea seeds imported to Japan from China so more of the Japanese population could enjoy this soothing beverage.

Tea arrived in England during the 17th century when King Charles II married a Portuguese princess, Queen Catherine of Braganza. The Queen introduced other English royals to this delicacy and soon it became the drink of

In the past, there were only two main meals a day. The first was breakfast, and the second was dinner, usually served around 8 o'clock. The time in between meals was quite long. Anna, the 7th Duchess of Bedford is said to have complained of having a "sinking feeling" around mid to late afternoon. It is this feeling that led to the daily ritual of afternoon tea.

To suppress her feeling, the Duchess of Bedford began to have a pot of tea and a light snack brought to her chambers during the afternoon. This happened in 1840. This snack consisted of a slice of cake. As she began to invite friends to partake in her afternoon treat, women across England began to take notice.

As more and more women were indulging in this afternoon treat, it was not long before this practice became respectable and suitable to be held in a public setting.



Pictured above is Anna, the 7th Duchess of Bedford.

Tea Basics

An afternoon tea can be a great way to gather old friends and reconnect or to celebrate a variety of occasions. To begin, the hostess must decide if the tea is to celebrate or to just gather in a friendly atmosphere.

Some of the main items needed to host an afternoon tea are a teapot, some teacups and saucers, small plates, forks and spoons, and a sugar dish and creamer. If the tea is a more informal affair, matching tea sets are not mandatory, but if you are looking for a more traditional look, matching is preferred.

Try to remember that afternoon tea is meant to take the slight edge of hunger off for a couple of hours. To maintain this light snack idea, finger sandwiches with minimal filling are desired. Some commonly chosen fillings are egg salad, ham and cheese and cucumber and cream cheese. The sandwiches are accompanied with a sweet. This can be a cake, or maybe a variety of cookies and squares. Some common sweets are date squares, fruitcake, and meringues.

To polish off your tea, set the table with a lovely tablecloth.