

# Tea Party



The popularity of chai tea has soared in the U.S. over the past few years—due in no small part to artisan tea makers like Wisconsin-based **Rishi Tea Company**. Rishi (the Sanskrit word for “sage” or “teacher”) is the brainchild of founder **Joshua Kaiser**, who set up shop in a tiny Milwaukee building in 1997. Kaiser still spends about nine months each year traveling in Asia, sourcing and studying tea. Rishi is one of the few companies in the specialty tea industry to operate on a model of direct trade—they work closely with tea growers, pay fair-trade premiums and are USDA-certified organic.

Chai (which means “tea” in Hindi) is a traditional Indian tea blend, made with black tea and spices and usually cooked with warm milk and sugar. This winter, Rishi introduced a

retail line of five loose-leaf chais, including innovative flavors like green tea, chocolate chai (a spicy take on traditional hot cocoa) and even a decaf version—all hand-blended in Milwaukee. “Loose tea offers a great value since [it] can be re-steeped multiple times,” says Rishi’s **Ghazal Sheel**. “The more you drink tea, you begin to sense the nuances and characteristics that make each tea so unique.”

A hot cup of tea is the perfect antidote to a Wisconsin winter—and Madisonians can find Rishi chai teas (and other blends) at **Willy Street Co-op**, **Barriques**, **Orange Tree Imports**, **La Brioche** and the **Washington Hotel Coffee Room**. [RishiTea.com](http://RishiTea.com)

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