

VICTORIAN AFTERNOON TEA

By the time of the reign of Queen Victoria in the mid-1800s the British had been drinking tea for quite some time. The idea of a formal afternoon tea as a meal to satisfy hunger between lunch and dinner is generally attributed to one individual, the then Duchess of Bedford, Anna Russell.

Russell had noticed she was getting hungry in the mid-afternoon, and began to ask for tea, and some cakes and scones to go with it. This became a regular event in her house, and soon she started inviting friends over to join her. The idea quickly took hold in high society, and eventually spread to down to the middle classes.

Afternoon Tea is usually comprised of three main elements:

- 1. A pot of tea, brewed using either tea bags or loose leaf tea**
- 2. Scones, paired with whipped or clotted cream, and jam**
- 3. A variety of small cakes and sandwiches**



DID YOU KNOW...

To this day there is an ongoing debate in the United Kingdom over how to properly prepare scones at tea time.

Typically a thick, or “clotted”, cream is put on scones with jam. There is still fierce disagreement over whether to put the cream on first, and top it with jam, or the other way around!

This practice has become well known throughout the world as a pleasant tradition to both enjoy company and a snack before an evening meal. Over the years, many different types of tea times have emerged. In addition to Afternoon Tea, there is Cream Tea, Royal Tea, High Tea, and a Ploughman’s Tea.

As afternoon tea first emerged in the wealthier parts of society, proper tea time etiquette became just as important as the meal itself. There are quite a few rules and procedures during a proper, and formal, afternoon tea.

These days it has become less formal, but a proper afternoon tea service is still seen as a special treat for most people.

Learn more about how to host a proper tea time with some fun questions below!

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Part One Know the different kinds of teas.

Draw a line to match the proper definition with the proper tea.

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| 1. Cream Tea <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> A) A hearty meal of bread, vegetables, cheese and occasionally meat, pie, potatoes and crackers. This tea is served between 6pm and 8pm at a high table originating with the field, factory and mine workers of the 19 th century |
| 2. Afternoon Tea <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> B) A tea served with hearty foods: meat pies, cheeses and fruits between 12pm and 2pm. |
| 3. Ploughman's tea <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> C) The same as an afternoon tea but with a glass of champagne for those extra special occasions. |
| 4. High Tea <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> D) Also known as a Devonshire tea, Devon cream or Cornish tea. An afternoon tea with a combination of scones, clotted cream and jam |
| 5. Royal Tea <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> E) A ritual introduced in Britain in the early 1840s. A mini meal composed sandwiches delicately cut into "Fingers", scones, clotted cream and jam. This tea is served between 3pm and 5pm at a low table. |

Part Two: Setting the table.

Which of the following items are found on a tea table? Circle the answer.

- A. One teapot full of hot water; tea bags; cream and sugar; teacups
- B. Stained linen; a caddy of loose-leaf tea, a tea strainer, a slop bowl, a cream pitcher, a sugar bowl, lemon slices on a glass dish as well as teacups and saucers
- C. White linen with needle-work and lace cloth; a teapot with boiling water, a caddy of loose-leaf tea, a tea strainer, a slop bowl, a cream pitcher, a sugar bowl, lemon slices on a glass dish as well as teacups and saucers; a stack of tea plates and/or napkins.
- D. Clean linen; a teapot, a kettle, a caddy of tea bags, a slop bowl, a cream pitcher, a sugar bowl as well as teacups and saucers; a stack of tea plates or napkins.

DID YOU KNOW...

In many parts of the United Kingdom, particularly in the north of England, people use the term "dinner" to describe what people in Canada would call lunch, and "Tea" to describe what people in Canada would call dinner, or supper.

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Part Three: Know how to behave

Write T (True) or F (False) next to the following behaviours

- ____: A tea slop basin is designed for used tea leaves.
- ____: You should always add milk to a tea if it has lemon in it.
- ____: Always dunk your biscuits, cookies and scones in your tea.
- ____: The hostess or person sitting closest to the tea pot serves the tea.
- ____: You should make as much noise as possible when stirring your tea.
- ____: You should stick out your pinky when sipping from your cup of tea.
- ____: At a formal tea party, you keep your gloves on while drinking tea.
- ____: When sitting at a table you should pick up the saucer when sipping tea.
- ____: It is usual to enjoy two cups of tea; one is never enough and three is too much.
- ____: At the end of the tea, the napkin is to be picked up and put to the left of the plate

DID YOU KNOW...

Afternoon Tea can be a very formal affair. It is considered impolite to eat the sandwiches, cakes or scones in one bite. Always take at least two bites or more!

How to host your own Afternoon Tea

A typical Afternoon Tea service will include:

- ❖ A pot of tea (usually a black tea like Earl Grey, but you can choose whichever tea is your favourite!). Be sure to put out some sugar, milk or cream for guests to put in their tea.
- ❖ Scones, with jars or small bowls of cream (whipped or clotted), jam (usually strawberry), and butter.
- ❖ Small sandwiches (cucumber slices between two buttered slices of bread are the most popular) and small cakes.
- ❖ Plates, tea cups and saucers, forks, knives, and napkins.
- ❖ If you have one, the food is usually served on a three-tier platter, but you can serve the scones, cakes and sandwiches on single-tier platters, or small plates.

EASY SCONE RECIPE

INGREDIENTS

2 cups flour
 1 tbs sugar
 1/2 tsp baking soda
 1/2 tsp baking powder
 1/4 tsp salt
 1/3 cup cold butter
 1/2 cup milk
 1 tsp vanilla extract
 1 large egg

-Preheat the oven to 425°F.
 -Mix the flour, sugar, baking soda and powder, and salt in a large bowl. Cut in the butter with a pastry blender until mixture resembles coarse crumbs
 -Mix liquid ingredients in a separate bowl, and pour into dry.
 -Slowly stir the liquid ingredients into the dry ingredients with a fork. Gather dough into a ball
 -Turn onto floured surface, knead 4 or 5 times and pat or roll dough into 1/2 inch to an inch thick round. Use the rim of a small glass or use a cookie cutter to cut dough into rounds
 -Place rounds on a baking sheet and bake for 12-15 minutes.
 Remove, let cool slightly, serve warm