

“Tea-making is a ritual that, like the drink itself, warms the heart somehow.”

-James Norwood Pratt

My husband makes me tea. He selects just the right cup, the right tea and the right moment. In that simple gesture, he communicates: he loves me, he sees me, he wants me well and he wants to pause the day long enough to appreciate me. All in a cup of tea. Not bad.

Legend tells us that tea arose from the discarded eyelids of the Bodhidharma who, in first century A.D., vowed to meditate for nine years without interruption. Sleep distracted him from his goal so in frustration, he cut off his eyelids and tossed them to the ground. In that precise place, the tea plant arose. The eyelid shaped tea leaves keep us alert to this day.

History tells us another story. More than five thousand years ago, Chinese Emperor Shen Nung, a scholar and master herbalist, prepared to cook a meal in his garden. Leaves from an overhanging tea tree blew into a pot of boiling water and tea was born. That plant is the *Camellia sinensis*, the single source of all teas. Second only to water, tea is the most consumed beverage in all the world.

Research in the past 20 years or so has proven what these ancient cultures already knew. Tea is a powerful healer with green tea boasting the richest health benefits of all.

Green tea is said to:

- help prevent heart disease
- inhibit the growth of tumors
- be 20x stronger than Vitamin E in its anti-aging properties
- be rich in Vitamin C
- aid digestion
- relieve thirst
- help reduce cholesterol by lowering blood lipids
- protect against cancer

Tea contains half the amount of caffeine that coffee does. A stimulant to the central nervous system, caffeine can be harmful when ingested in excess and can be addictive. The caffeine in tea is theobromine and theophylline which are gentler stimulants than the caffeine in coffee.

When making a tea selection, choose loose leaf tea as opposed to tea bags. Like everything we let into our bodies, we want to be discriminating. Tea bags, almost without exception, contain the dust resulting from the tea leaf processing. Tea leaves in bags have been ground to the point of being unrecognizable and offer far less in terms of health and sensory experience. Often we understandably add milk to disguise the taste of those inferior “teas” and in doing so, we actually inhibit the tea’s naturally occurring antioxidants. Loose leaf teas permits the hot water to circulate and therefore for the full taste potential to be released.

Preparing and drinking tea enable us to capture those sacred spaces between the tasks on our to do list. The ritual of tea allows us to engage in the lost art of being as opposed to doing. Embrace the gifts that tea, green tea in particular, have to offer.

A divine cup of green tea-

- 1 tsp quality loose leaf green tea
- 1 C freshly boiled water left to stand for 2-3 mins after boiling
- 1 teapot
- 1 teacup
- 1 strainer
- 1 serene spot
- 10 moments to savor

Place tea leaves in a teapot and gently pour the water over the leaves. After 1 minute of steeping, pour the brew through a strainer into a teacup. Reuse until bitter or without taste.

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The majority of Katie’s clients participate in a 6 month life changing program designed to make lasting changes and cultivate health promoting rituals of self-care. In addition to 50 minute one on one sessions every 2 weeks during the 6 months, Katie invites clients into her home where the learning continues. Together in community, 6 month participants explore aromatherapy, raw food desserts, smoothies, juicing, green cleaning, meditation, Japanese tea ceremony, feng shui, vegan cooking and baking, home organization and more. For more information, visit www.bnourished.com.

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