

FROM THE GROUND UP

Loose Leaf Herbal Teas

SPRING 2015



Raising healthy eaters
one taste at a time...

HISTORY & NUTRITIONAL INFO

Welcome back Wonderland Coyotes! Our school year is winding down, to celebrate this year's accomplishments you're invited, to FTGU's year end Tea Party! There's no age requirement or limit; tea is beneficial for everybody. New studies show caffeine free teas like herbal teas or Rooibos tea help improve digestion, is high in Vitamin C, is hydrating (like water) and can even help soothe sunburns.

That's just the tip of the iceberg! It can do a lot for adults too. One Japanese study found that tea lowers the risk of heart disease. It can also lower cholesterol levels, and it helps prevent cancer if you consume over 2 cups a day. If you're not convinced yet, think about this drinking green tea helps ward off colds and the flu!

History of Tea

So where does this precious herbal remedy come from? Well, herbal teas are from herb plants like rosemary, sage, lavender, lemon balm and more traditional teas like black, green, white or oolong tea come from *Camellia sinensis*. *Camellia* is native to Asia,

and China is considered the birthplace of tea. But there are many legends about who discovered it, so let's steep a hot cup of tea and explore the history of the simple tea leaf!

One legend claims that tea was discovered in 2737 BC by the Emperor of China. For several hundred years, people drank tea because of its herbal medicinal qualities. By the time of the Western Zhou Dynasty, tea was used as a religious offering. During the Han Dynasty (202 BC - 220 AD), tea plants were quite limited and only royalty drank tea not only for their health but also for the taste. As more tea plants were discovered during the Tang Dynasty (618 - 907), tea drinking became more common and everyone was introduced to its benefits. The Chinese government supported planting of tea plants and even the building of tea shops so everyone could enjoy tea.

Experience the variety of flavors in herbal teas. You can always create a Tea Note to remember your favorite tea blend.

Make Your Own Herbal Tea Blend (herbgardens.about.com)

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Mixing your own [herbs](#) for tea, is as easy as choosing the [scents](#) that appeal to you and blending up your favorite choices. I find that in the summer months, ice tea is the beverage of choice in my home. Here are the basic herbs that I grow to make a fabulous tea that everyone loves.

¥ **Flowery Notes**-The basic blend includes [flowery notes](#) of some sort. I use violet flowers, [chamomile](#) flowers, [dandelion](#) petals, calendula petals or wild rose petals for this. Add **one** part of this herb.

¥ **Place Holder**-After adding the flowers (fresh or dried), I add the place holding flavor. To this, I mean the flavor that ties everything together and keeps my iced tea tasting strong enough to withstand a few ice cubes melting into it. Dried [red raspberry leaves](#) or dried nettles work well here. Add **two** parts of these herbs.

¥ **Fruity**-Next, a fruity or naturally sweet component is nice. I use dried rosehips most often. These are sold in many herb shops or health food stores if you have not harvested your own. Another addition to this would be [Hibiscus flowers](#). They are not only sweet and lemony flavored, they also impart a rich, red color to your teas. Add **one** part of these herbs.

¥ **Cooling**-Finally, I add the cooling herb. Mint is usually most common here. You can add any combination or variety of your available mints. Add one part of these herbs. A nice and naturally cooling herb is Borage. The leaves or flowers can be used.

After mixing up your favorite blend of [herb tea](#), using these ideas, keep in a glass jar in a dark place.

Use at least one teaspoon of dried herbs per cup of water, more to taste.

A part means that whatever measurement you have handy: i.e. your hand, a cup, a tablespoon, is the overall measurement, and you use one or more of them per ingredient. I hope you can come up with a variation to call your own, that tastes refreshing and delicious for your whole family.



If YOU try a Tasting recipe at home, be sure to report back next month about how your family liked the recipe!