

American History Of Iced Tea

Where did iced tea become popular?

Iced tea enthusiasts often credit South Carolina as the birthplace of iced tea. Tea arrived to the southern state at the tail end of the 18th century when French botanist Andre Michaux brought it to Charleston along with other flowers like camellias, gardenias and azaleas. The drink took off, and eventually creative individuals started experimenting with new preparation methods. While it is impossible to determine who first brewed iced tea, cookbooks showed recipes for iced tea beginning in the early 19th century. Back then, the most popular iced teas were green tea punches spiked with liquor, or sweet and creamy versions that contained cream, sugar and green tea.

Toward the end of the 19th century, black tea recipes started gaining traction. In “Mrs. Lincoln’s Boston Cook Book: What to Do and What Not to Do in Cooking,” Mrs. D. A. Lincoln printed a recipe for making iced black tea much like we do today: strong black tea poured over ice with sugar and lemon.

Iced Tea was not explicitly commercialized until the 1904 World’s Fair in St. Louis when merchant Richard Blechynden offered it to parched attendees. Since then, it has taken off as an American staple. Today, the most common form of iced tea is black sweet tea, where it surpasses its hotter version in popularity.

The Health Benefits Of Iced Tea

What are the benefits to drinking iced tea?

Iced teas are made from all sorts of different teas, but they all come from the same plant: Camellia. The Camellia plant leaves, no matter how they are processed, pack great health benefits because they contain powerful antioxidants. Antioxidants are nutrients that slow the oxidative damage to our bodies. When human cells use oxygen, they produce free radical byproducts that can cause damage. Antioxidants scavenge the body for these byproducts to prevent and repair damage. Studies have shown that antioxidants reduce the risk of coronary heart disease, diabetes, macular degeneration and even lower cancer risks. They also have been shown to strengthen the immune system, and can be effective in lowering risk of Alzheimer’s disease.

Iced green tea, Oolong tea and black tea, all delicious iced teas, have some of the most powerful antioxidants found in nature, called phenols. Iced tea not only refreshes, it strengthens the body with every sip. Drink to that!

Iced Tea Across The World

What is the only country who favors their tea cold?

Iced tea is different in each country, but America is the only country that consumes most of their tea cold. American iced tea is a southern staple, a refreshing alternative to soda pop.

In Canada, almost all iced tea is sweetened and is usually flavored with lemon. Much of the iced tea comes prepackaged, or is made from a powder instead of from tea bags. In China, iced tea is gaining popularity, especially teas with “yin” or cooling herbs like chrysanthemum and kuding. The Chinese, though, make iced tea by pouring strong hot tea over ice to cool it down. In Japan, pre-packaged iced tea in cans and bottles has been made popular by brands like Lipton, Suntory, Kirin and Coca-Cola.

Taiwan has its own special type of iced tea: bubble tea. Bubble tea is made of a strong black tea, which is sweetened with sugar and condensed milk. Tapioca pearls are then added for the “bubbles.” Bubble tea usually comes in many flavors, and sometimes has fruit or jelly in it instead of tapioca.

How To Make Iced Tea

What is a fun way to dress up iced tea?

Iced tea is simple to make, and can be made in large quantities for parties, as well as to keep on hand. One important iced tea tip is to brew iced tea stronger than you usually like tea, because the ice will dilute the flavor. To make one pitcher, place 8–10 tea bags in a plastic (glass could break from the heat) pitcher and pour 4 cups of boiling water over them. Let the tea steep for five minutes (remember, you want the tea stronger than usual). Take the bags out of the pitcher and add 4 more cups of cold water. Serve immediately over ice, or keep cool in the refrigerator for refreshment later.

To flavor iced tea, you can use syrups, sugars or fruit. Lemon is possibly the most popular flavor of iced tea, but peach and passion fruit are also popular. Try different flavors during the summer for variety. Better yet, freeze fruit like grapes or melon balls for a festive alternative to ice.

Flavoring Iced Tea

How do you flavor iced tea?

Iced Tea is usually served flavored and there are many ways to add zest to yours. First, brew your iced tea as usual, and then pick your flavors. The most popular flavor is lemon, and you can either squeeze fresh lemon juice right into the tea or garnish the glass with a slice of lemon, or you can even create an Arnold Palmer. To make an Arnold Palmer, pour half a glass of iced tea, and fill the rest with lemonade.

If you are brewing herbal tea, try adding a few cups of fruit juices like cranberry or apple juice to your pitcher of tea. Not only does this add flavor and sweetness, it also will add vitamins and minerals to your beverage.

Another way to flavor your tea is to toss some mint leaves into your pitcher after you have added the cold water. They will look colorful and fresh, and taste even better.

Cold-Brewing Iced Tea

Can you cold brew iced tea?

The newest way to brew iced tea is even simpler than traditional ways: by leaving it cold. Cold-brewing iced tea will create a milder, less bitter flavor, but will still carry the refreshing taste and excellent health benefits. Fill a pitcher with cold water, and place tea bags or loose leaf tea in the water. Use a good quality tea, and add more leaves than you generally would use when making hot-brewed tea, as the cold water will not extract quite as much flavor as the hot version.

If you are using loose leaf tea, try to use about one tablespoon of tea per pint of water. Place the pitcher in the refrigerator and let it steep overnight. In the morning, strain out the tea or remove the tea bags. Then, add ice, flavoring or fruit. This way, you have conserved energy by not boiling water, and have just as refreshing a beverage.

Teas For Brewing Iced Tea

How much tea should you use?

Iced tea is very popular in the warmer months, and it is a simple alternative to carbonated soda pops, which are loaded with sugars and chemicals. When brewing iced tea, choose your favorite flavor of tea. Oolongs, black teas, and green teas all make for great iced teas because of their pronounced flavor, and herbal teas are particularly refreshing when combined with fruit juices.

Keep in the mind that iced tea requires a stronger brew because the beverage is diluted when first cooled, and again diluted when ice is added. For this reason, some of the more subtle teas, including white teas and some herbal teas are not popular among iced tea drinkers.

Also, some teas when brewed as iced teas leave a cloudy haze in the beverage. The cloudiness is caused by tannins. And, even though tannins are harmless, an excess can make for a bitter and less appealing beverage.

Combining Iced Teas

How can you liven up your tea?

Iced tea is a refreshing summer beverage, and one way to spice up the classic drink is to mix your teas. When you brew your iced tea, don't just put in one kind of tea leaf. Try mixing green tea and black tea, or different kinds of herbal teas like raspberry with Echinacea, apple teas and berry teas. Chamomile will go well with a lemon tea. Think outside the box and mix different kinds of tea like combining a mint tea with a black tea, or a green tea with an orange tea.

Brew them together in a ratio so that the total amount of tea leaves per pint of water is one teaspoon of tea to one pint of water. To round out your flavors, add flavors like honey, sugar or fruit juices, or use frozen fruit cubes as ice alternatives. Toss in a sprig of mint and you have top-notch iced tea!

Calories In Iced Tea

How many calories are in iced tea?

Unsweetened herbal iced tea does not have any calories because it only contains water and leaf nutrients. Adding sugars, syrups and fruit juices can pour in calories and make a healthy drink as sugary as any soda pop.

To avoid calories in your iced tea this summer, avoid powdered teas. They contain a lot of sugars and additives that can stir in as many as 400 calories per glass! High fructose corn syrup and other sugary syrups sound bad for you, and they are bad for you. If you want to flavor your iced tea, it is much healthier to avoid syrups altogether and toss in fruit flavored teas into your tea mixture, or add in fruit juices which add calories, but also add vitamins like vitamin C, vitamin A and iron.

For a no-calorie option, add sweeteners like Equal or Splenda, which will add flavor without the calories. Nestea, Lipton and Snapple all make pre-packaged iced teas that come sweetened with corn syrups and sugar. Brewing your own iced tea will keep the calories out of your cup.

Staying Hydrated With Iced Tea

How does iced tea hydrate you?

It is very important to stay hydrated in the summer months when the sun is hot. Dehydration is a serious concern in the heat, and can cause stomach cramping, headaches, muscle aches, and even be fatal in forms of heat stroke.

Refreshing iced tea seems like it would be a great option to stay hydrated, but there are a few things to remember. Many iced teas are brewed from black teas that contain caffeine. Caffeine is a diuretic and while it might feel like you are drinking large

quantities of liquid when drinking a lot of iced tea, chances are your body is not keeping enough water in your system.

Because you sweat more in the summer and are often outside burning calories, your body requires more water in your system to perform. Make sure to drink plenty of water or non-caffeinated iced tea a day in addition to any caffeinated iced tea you drink. This will ensure your body is healthy enough to enjoy summer activities.