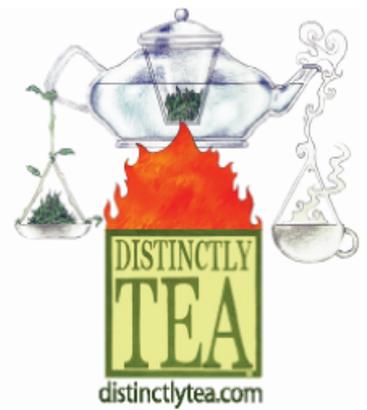


June 2011

Steeped!



Ahhh, June. Finally, the rain seems to have let up enough for the sun to shine down, warm up the soil and help give life to our freshly planted annuals and vegetables. For many June signals the start of summer, and the accompanying patio parties, weddings, cottage weekends and camping trips. With so many outings, it never hurts to have some quick gift ideas in mind:

- Consider bringing a rooibos or fruit tea as a hostess gift
- A gift basket can be made to order with a lovely selection of teas, mugs, teapots and snacks for a pair of newlyweds or any other special occasion
- A warming blend like a Lapsang Souchong, the Mandarin Spice Rooibos, or Genmaitcha can round out an evening by the campfire or at the cottage
- An iced tea blend will be a real treat for a backyard bbq on a sweltering day.
- A nice mug with a tea picked out especially for that friend that did you a favor

What's that? Not too sure about drinking tea on those hot sticky days? Read on!

Tea? In the Summer? Absolutely!

Considering that one of the body's basic functions is thermoregulation — keeping your core body temperature within the very narrow range required for optimal functioning — the body will make every attempt to cool down in hot weather. Perspiring, increased thirst, decreased appetite, resting...these are all ways to limit excessive energy expenditures that would heat up the body. By drinking a warm or hot drink, we may actually aid this process of cooling down. According to the principles of hydrotherapy, heat applied to an area (or in this case, drinking hot tea) will cause a dilation of nearby blood vessels. When this local vasodilation occurs, heat is more easily dissipated not only from the vessels, but ultimately from the body. The reverse holds true as well, as vasoconstriction reduces heat. In addition, drinking something hot will cause your face to flush and some perspiration, while the addition of some herbs like peppermint and licorice actually encourage diaphoresis — sweating — and may help to further cool oneself.

The *Camellia sinensis* plant, also known as the Tea Plant, is grown worldwide, everywhere from China, to India, and Africa where tea is regularly enjoyed despite many of the regions being some of the hottest in the world. Some say it is a cultural matter, a tradition, while others claim that there is a physiological reason behind a hot drink on an even hotter day. Mint tea is very popular in Morocco and throughout North Africa and is-



served as a drink of hospitality. Rooibos tea is ubiquitous in South Africa. Masala chai, Darjeeling and Assam teas are a regular part of a meal in India and the subcontinent. Gathering for Yerba Mate constitutes a regular social outing for people in Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina. And these nations are not known for being particularly chilly! According to Traditional Chinese Medicine, green tea or warm water are consumed on hot days to “cool” the body—and they don’t necessarily have to be piping hot (warm tea will also work). In fact, some practitioners caution against drinking cold water in the heat lest the drinker gets abdominal cramps. Furthermore, the body burns a few extra calories warming up that cold drink (or ice cream!) and may actually make you feel warmer! In other areas, the argument goes that the drinking water is not safe unless boiled, so it is regularly heated and tea leaves added – much more flavorful than plain water.

Consider also, that many of these tea growing nations tend to be poorer countries, adding tea leaves not only serves to re-hydrate those who drink it, but also provide flavonoids that may be lacking in the diet. The term “flavonoid” is used to describe a class of molecules that are found in many plant sources. In tea, the most common form are catechins (including the most studied epigallocatechin 3-gallate or EGCG) and these molecules are known for their antioxidant effects, and linked to being anti-inflammatory, anti-cancer, and immune boosting.

Traditionally miners used to drink hot beverages while working, and many believed that it helped them to feel cooler down in the sweltering heat of the mineshafts. Workers in the Middle East do this as well. An option for those of us that work outdoors or without the luxury of an air conditioner? Try it for yourself! We need to drink plenty of fluids in the warmer seasons, and tea is a much healthier alternative to sugary prepared drinks. And if this seems a little far-fetched, there is always iced tea.

NEW to Distinctly Tea: Hockley Valley’s Organic Unpasteurized Honey



Honey is one of nature’s perfect foods: it has antibacterial properties, tastes great and will never spoil. Distinctly Tea now carries 100% Certified Organic Unpasteurized Honey for Hockley Valley Farms. Made from pristine wildflower pollen grown in sheltered meadows in the Niagara Escarpment, this honey tastes exquisite as a spread, in baking or on its own. Following a long tradition of artisan bee keepers, the folks at Hockley Valley have been awarded and recognized several times over for their superior products, and their environmentally friendly practices. Since their products are organic certified, no pesticides, antibiotics, feeding sugars, or genetic modification occurs. By not pasteurized (heating) the honey, the health-giving properties of the honey remain intact. What you get is simply delicious, pure honey.

A brand new study this April in the Scientific World Journal clearly shows that honey is a very effective broad spectrum antibiotic and can clean an infected wound safely. Honey also helps to minimize scarring, encourages new cell growth and decreases inflammation. Traditionally honey has been used to treat burns, ulcers, wounds, many types of infections, allergies, coughs, sore throats...and a sweet tooth. An all-natural and effective home remedy for many conditions!

Hockley Valley also has a line of lip balms available at Distinctly Tea made from the only the finest organic cold-pressed extra virgin olive oil, vitamin E, organic jojoba oil, a variety of essential oils and of course, their prize winning (Royal Winter Fair and Ontario’s Beekeeper Association) organic wildflower beeswax right from the hives. Treat your lips, the most sensitive part of your body, to something good.

Please be aware that the Centre for Disease Control strongly advises against feeding honey to infants under 12 months of age due to the risk of *C. botulinum* toxin causing Botulism—flaccid paralysis- in infants. Honey is otherwise safe to consume for the general population.