

# *SPRING AFTERNOON TEA*

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# SPRING AFTERNOON TEA-A HUG IN A MUG

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*This is the kind of beautiful, elegant affair we all envision when we think of afternoon tea. Pretty, delicate teacups and saucers, silver tiered trays, and delicious tea sandwiches, scones, and pastries to nibble. It is certainly, as the British would say, proper; however, I think it should also be fun! Invite a group of good friends to get a bit dressed up and enjoy a great Afternoon Tea with you.*

*There is no need to invest large sums of money buying special tea cups, saucers, trays and silverware. Look around your house and find items that you can use to create a gorgeous and memorable atmosphere. A tastefully decorated table, a variety of delicious food, maybe a few flowers and some soft music and you are all set to have a wonderful afternoon. And remember, when hosting a tea party, you don't want to spend the afternoon in the kitchen. Pre-planning is the key. So, go ahead and plan an afternoon tea and have some fun.*

*The following are some ideas, suggestions, and recipes you can use to create your afternoon tea. Enjoy.*

***Chef Cal***

## *SCONES RECIPES*

This is a basic scone recipe. You can fold in chocolate chips, currents, ground spices, shredded coconut, shredded cheese, ground tea leaves, or chopped dried fruit before rolling out the dough. You can make the dough and cut out the scones ahead of time, then store them, covered, in the refrigerator for a few days, and bake them just before serving. You can also freeze baked scones for up to a month, wrapped tightly in several layers of plastic. Take them out of the freezer several hours before you plan to serve them and let them come to room temperature. If you want to serve them warm, heat them in a 250-degree oven for 5 to 8 minutes.

### **BASIC SCONES RECIPE**

2 cups all –purpose flour

3 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons sugar

1 tablespoon baking powder

½ teaspoon salt

¾ stick (6 tablespoons) unsalted butter, chilled, cut into pieces

1 large egg

½ cup plus 1 tablespoon light cream or half-and-half

Clotted Cream (recipe follows)

Preheat the oven to 400-degrees

Combine the flour, 3 tablespoons of the sugar, the baking powder, and the salt in a medium bowl. Cut in the butter with a pastry blender or a fork.

In a small bowl, whisk together the egg and ½ cup of the cream. Add the egg mixture to the dry mixture and stir until just moistened. Turn the dough onto a lightly floured surface. Knead until just smooth (10 to 12 strokes); then roll out the dough to about a ½ inch thickness and cut out 3-inch circles or other fun shapes. Place the cutouts on an ungreased baking sheet or baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Brush the tops with the remaining 1 tablespoon cream and sprinkle with the remaining 2 teaspoons sugar. Bake for 12 to 14 minutes, or until golden. Cool on a wire rack for at least 5 minutes. Serve warm if you can, or at room temperature, with clotted cream. This makes 10 to 12 three inch scones.

## **CLOTTED CREAM**

This is a traditional teatime accompaniment to scones. If you don't want to make your own, you can find clotted cream or Devonshire cream at many grocery stores, gourmet markets and specialty stores.

1 cup heavy cream, at room temperature  
½ cup sour cream, at room temperature  
1 tablespoon confectioners' sugar

Whip the heavy cream in a medium bowl until soft peaks form. Whisk in the sour cream and sugar and beat until the mixture is thick. Refrigerate, covered, for at least 4 hours prior to serving.

## **BLUEBERRY AND BASIL SCONES**

2 cups self-rising flour  
2 tablespoons sugar  
2½ teaspoons fresh lemon zest, divided  
5 tablespoons cold salted butter  
2 tablespoons minced fresh basil  
¾ cup cold heavy whipping cream  
½ cup fresh blueberries  
½ cup plus 1 tablespoon confectioners' sugar  
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

Preheat oven to 400-degrees

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and set aside. In a medium bowl, combine flour, sugar and 2 teaspoons lemon zest, whisking until combined. Using a pastry blender, cut butter into flour mixture until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Add basil, stirring to combine. Add cream, stirring until mixture forms soft dough, (If mixture seems dry, add more cream, 1 tablespoon at a time, until a dough forms.)

On a lightly floured surface, knead dough lightly 3 times. Roll out to a ½-inch thickness. Scatter ¼ cup blueberries on half of the dough. Fold over other half of dough over blueberries to enclose them. Lightly roll out dough again to ½ inch thickness. Repeat scattering, folding, and rolling process for remaining ¼ cup blueberries.

Using a 2½ - inch round cutter, cut 12 scones from dough, rerolling scrapes as little as possible. Place scones 2 inches apart on prepared baking sheet. Bake until edges are light golden brown, 10 to 11 minutes. Remove to a wire rack.

In a small bowl, combine confectioners' sugar, lemon juice, and remaining ½ teaspoon lemon zest, whisking until smooth. Spoon glaze over scones, letting glaze drip down sides; Garnish with fresh blueberries and basil, if desired. Makes 1 dozen scones

## **BRIE AND OLIVE SCONES**

2¼ cups all-purpose flour  
1 tablespoon granulated sugar  
2½ teaspoons baking powder  
½ teaspoon salt  
¼ teaspoon ground black pepper  
¼ cup cold unsalted butter, cubed  
½ cup coarsely chopped Spanish olives  
4 ounces Brie, cut into ¼-inch cubes (approx. ¾ cups)  
½ cup plus 3 tablespoons cold heavy cream, divided  
1 large egg

Preheat oven to 375-degrees. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.

In a large bowl, whisk together flour, sugar, baking powder, salt, and pepper. Using a pastry blender or 2 forks, cut in the cold butter until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Add olives and cheese, stirring until incorporated.

In a small bowl, whisk together ½ cup plus 2 tablespoons cream and egg. Add to flour mixture, stirring until dough begins to form. Working gently bring mixture

together with hands until dough forms. (If mixture seems dry and dough won't come together, add more cream, 1 tablespoon at a time.)

Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface, and knead gently 8 to 10 times until smooth dough forms. Using a rolling pin, roll out dough to a  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch thickness. Using a 2½-inch round cutter, cut 14 scones from dough, rerolling scraps as necessary. Place scones 2 inches apart on prepared baking sheet.

Brush tops of scones with remaining 1 tablespoon cream. Bake until golden brown, approximately 23 minutes. Remove from pan to wire rack and let cool for a few minutes, then serve warm with Honey Butter.

### **HONEY BUTTER**

Mix 3½ ounces (Approx. 7 tablespoons) salted butter at room temperature with 1 teaspoon honey until smooth.

1 teaspoon honey

### **HIGH TEA OATMEAL SCONES**

2 cups all-purpose flour

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup firmly packed brown sugar

4teaspoons baking powder

$\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt

One 12 oz. package semi-sweet mini chocolate chips

2 cups quick oats, uncooked

4 eggs, beaten

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup heavy (whipping) cream

2 tablespoons granulated sugar

Preheat oven to 425-degrees.

In a large bowl, combine flour, brown sugar, baking powder and salt. With pastry blender or 2 knives, cut in butter until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Stir in mini chocolate chips and oats.

Reserve 2 tablespoons beaten eggs; combine remaining beaten eggs with heavy cream. Stir this into dry ingredients just until moistened.

On lightly floured board, roll dough to ½ inch thickness. Cut into 2-inch diamonds. Place on ungreased cookie sheets. Brush with reserved beaten egg; sprinkle with granulated sugar. Bake 10 minutes or until golden brown. Makes about 36 scones

## **DILL SOUR CREAM SCONES**

2 cups all-purpose flour  
2 tablespoons baking powder  
½ teaspoon baking soda  
½ teaspoon salt  
4 tablespoons butter at room temperature  
2 eggs  
½ cup sour cream  
1 tablespoon chopped fresh dill or 1 teaspoon dried dill weed

Preheat oven to 425 –degrees.

Combine flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Cut in butter with pastry blender or two forks until mixture resembles coarse crumbs.

Beat eggs with fork in small bowl; add sour cream and dill. Beat until well combined. Stir this into flour mixture until mixture forms soft dough that leaves side of the bowl.

Turn out onto well-floured surface. Knead dough 10 times.\* Roll dough using floured rolling pin into 9 x 6 inch rectangle. Cut dough into 6 (3-inch) squares. Cut each square diagonally in half, making 12 triangles. Place triangles, 2-inches apart, on ungreased baking sheets.

Bake 10 to 12 minutes or until golden brown. Cool on wire racks 10 minutes. Serve warm. Makes 12 scones

\*To knead dough, fold dough in half toward you and press dough away from you with heels of hands. Give dough a quarter turn and continue folding, pushing and turning.

## **STRAWBERRY AND ORANGE BLOSSOM SCONES**

2 cups all-purpose flour  
½ cup granulated sugar  
2 teaspoons baking powder  
½ teaspoon table salt  
¼ cup cold, unsalted butter, cubed  
1 cup cold heavy whipping cream  
¾ teaspoon orange blossom water  
½ cup chopped (approximately ½ -inch pieces) fresh strawberries, patted dry

Preheat oven to 400-degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

In a large bowl, whisk together flour, sugar, baking powder and salt. Using a pastry blender or 2 forks cut cold butter into flour mixture until it resembles coarse crumbs.

In a small bowl, stir together cream and orange blossom water. Gradually add enough cream mixture to flour mixture until dough begins to form, stirring with a fork. Gently stir in strawberries.

Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface, and knead gently 4 to 5 times. Divide dough in half. Roll or pat half of dough into a 1-inch thick circle. Using a large sharp knife dipped in flour, cut dough circle into 6 wedges. Repeat process with remaining dough. Place scones 2-inches apart on prepared baking sheets. Bake until bottoms of scones are golden brown, 15 to 20 minutes. Serve warm. Makes 12 scones

## ORIGINAL BAILIWICK INN SCONE RECIPE

12 oz. butter cubed & chilled (6 oz.)  
2/3 cup sugar (1/3 cup)  
5 tablespoons baking powder (2 ½ Tablespoons)  
¾ teaspoon salt (little less than ½ teaspoon)  
1 teaspoon baking soda (1/2 teaspoon)  
6 cups all- purpose flour (3 cups flour)  
2 tablespoons orange zest (1 tablespoon)  
1 cup dried fruit (currents, dates or something like that – the Inn used currents)  
(1/2 cup)  
2 cups buttermilk (1 cup)

Using a Kitchen Aide mixer, combine the flour, sugar, butter, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Blend at slow speed using the paddle attachment. Stir in the fruit and orange peel. Add the buttermilk and blend till dough comes away from the side of the bowl. DO NOT OVER BLEND. Roll out dough to ¾ of an inch thickness and cut into biscuits size rounds, about 2 inches across. Bake on parchment lined baking sheet in 350–degree oven till golden brown. Sprinkle with powdered sugar and serve warm with Devonshire cream and preserves.

Note: You can make the scones and place them, cut out, on a parchment lined baking sheet and freeze, then transfer to a freezer storage bag and store in the freezer. When ready to use, simply remove from freezer, leave at room temperature for about 30 minutes, then bake as above.

***In the above recipe, the amounts for ingredients shown in ( ) are for making ½ a batch of scones. The original recipe makes about 40 scones.***

## *TEA SANDWICHES*

Tea sandwiches are lovely little two-to-three-bite treats that go perfectly with tea. There are three basic components to tea sandwiches; the bread, the filling, and the presentation. The one common denominator they all have is freshness. Most tea sandwiches can't be prepared too far in advance since either the bread base will get stale, or the filling will leach into the bread. Once assembled, they need to be kept cool, usually under refrigeration and covered with a damp towel. Almost anything that can be placed on a piece of bread can become a tea sandwich.

Cut them into pretty shapes with cookie cutters. Think hearts, flowers, circles, and diamonds. With the top slices, cut shapes within shapes (for example, a heart shaped cutout in the center of a flower shape) so some of the filling shows through. Stack them up, if one layer tastes delicious, add another one or two layers of filling and bread for a tea sandwich with serious height. Finally, spread a tiny bit of mayonnaise or butter along the edge of a tea sandwich, then dip the edge into a plate of chopped dill, chives, lavender, or other dried herbs or mild spices. The herbs adhere to the bread and give it another depth of flavor as well as a visual appeal with a dash of color.

### **The Bread:**

You can use almost any type/style/taste of bread to make a tea sandwich. Some of the most popular are honey wheat, rye, pumpernickel, whole wheat, oatmeal, country white, marbled, thin-sliced white, rosemary bread, olive bread, French or Italian baguette slices and an assortment of mini rolls. In some cases the bread is lightly toasted; however in most instances it is served untoasted. Some presentations are open-faced, meaning only one slice of bread, while other are closed or stacked. In many instances a very thin layer or spreading of soft butter is applied to the bread to form a barrier between the filling and the bread, thus avoiding the leaching of the filling into the bread. All components such as cheese, lettuce, meats, or other items are almost always cut and trimmed in size to fit the bread in order to present a neat appearance.

## **The fillings:**

The one essential of all fillings is that they do not contain too much liquid otherwise they become soggy and shorten the display life of the sandwich. Since tea sandwiches are mainly one or two bite snacks, the fillings should not overpower the presentation, meaning a little goes a long way. Also keep in mind that whatever goes on top of the bread needs to be secure enough that when the sandwich is lifted toward the mouth, the filling or toppings do not slide off. In many cases a dab of butter, mayonnaise, or mustard can secure things in place. Since all tea sandwiches contain a platform, namely the bread, I am not going to spend a great deal of time on that, which we will discuss in some detail in the presentation section. Instead I am going to give you recipes for the fillings, the spreads, the toppings and the combinations that make tea sandwiches so much fun.

## **Fillings and spreads:**

Egg Salad- Simple enough, hard boil some eggs and you are good to go. The secrete I have found and used for years is to grate my cooked eggs, that's right, instead of chopping the hard cooked eggs. I grate them into a bowl. I find that gives me a smoother egg salad, one without large chunks of either the yolk or the whites. Once the eggs are grated, I add enough mayonnaise to make a smooth filling, adding a little mustard for tartness, some dill to add extra flavor, and sometimes chopped up bacon to add crunch. You can add chopped pickle, chopped spices and herbs, a dash of pickle juice, some hot sauce, some onion, shallots or garlic – all chopped, or some capers. You can spread it on bread as an open-face tea sandwich or cover it and serve it as a finger sandwich.

Tuna – Salmon – Shrimp - Crab spreads – similar to the egg salad, once you decide which one to use, you add a little mayonnaise with some mustard, maybe a teaspoon of sour cream, hot sauce and seasonings. This mixture can be spread or piped onto you bread of choice. The thing to remember here is to ensure the seafood you use is finely chopped or broken up so the spread is easy to apply. Drain the tuna, whether it is packed in water or those packed in oil. The same goes for the salmon. Peel the shrimp and prior to using crab, check for any tiny bits of shell. If using freshly cooked salmon, be sure to check for pin-bones and remove any you find. Most seafood spreads go great with cream cheese, finely

diced red onion, capers, and fresh dill. Shrimp and crab go great with Old Bay seasoning. One thing to remember, use the freshest seafood possible for the best tasting sandwich.

Chicken and/or Turkey salad – There are so many combinations for chicken and turkey salad. You have either all white meat or all dark meat or a combination of the two. You have onions, capers, herbs, nuts, fruit, mayonnaise and mustard. Any mixture is fine. For intense celery flavor, use the soft celery leaves, finely chopped, that you find in the center of the celery stalk. Those leaves pack a powerful flavor, more so than a finely diced celery stalk. Salt and pepper are a must, as well as hot sauce. I find the best sauce of the cooked chicken is that taken from an already roasted chicken purchased from the market. It proves me with plenty of meat without my having to cook the chicken. Just peel the skin off, chop what you want and add the flavorings. As for turkey, I usually make this during the holiday season when I have leftover turkey. When chopping the meat, try to keep the pieces of equal size, or better yet, run the cut-up meat through a food processor.

Cheese spreads – Probably the most commonly used cheese for spreads is cream cheese. You can add so many additional flavors. Boursin cheese is also a good choice, as well as Mascarpone cheese. In most applications you will want the cheese to come to room temperature so it is easier to work with and to spread. The southern classic, Pimento Cheese, is a staple of almost all southern teas. Many cheese spreads call for a combination of shredded Cheddar and Monterey Jack cheese. The use of Swiss cheese, Asiago Cheese, and Provolone cheeses add additional “zap” to many sandwiches.

Meats - As many different varieties of sliced meats there are, so are their use in making tea sandwiches. Anything that can be placed between two slices of bread can be transformed into a tea sandwich just by downsizing the ingredients. Beef, Pork and Lamb can all be found in tea sandwich recipes. What makes them so tasty is the combinations applied to each. For example, a slice of rare roast beef, a slice of Swiss cheese and a slice of apple make a great tea sandwich. Add some creamed horseradish to the bread with just a little parsley on top and you have one great tea sandwich. A small portion of caramelized onions on top of thin sliced pork makes a very tasty combination. Lamb with favored chutney is great, as is lamb with Greek Feta cheese or Greek olives.

## **The Presentation:**

I don't even know where to begin here. There are literally hundreds and hundreds of presentation ideas that can be used. Just by changing the shape of the tiny bits of food presented lends excitement and intrigue to a plate of tea sandwiches and sweets. Cookie cutters are a great source of ideas, ranging from simple heart shapes to more complex shapes, such as squares, triangles, diamonds, ovals, and oblong sandwiches. And most come in a variety of sizes. There are cutter sets available offering round, square and oblong cutters in decreasing sizes. You can serve open-face, regular two-slice sandwiches or stacked sandwiches. You can take a simple egg salad and by changing up the bread type used, i.e. white, wheat or dark pumpernickel, and by changing the shape of the bread the salad is presented on, create a variety of a single flavored sandwich.

Of all the classes I have taught over the years, the hardest to do and the most expensive have been classes on the presentation of food. At the better restaurants all across this country, there is usually a chef whose sole function is the presentation of the plates going out to the diners. Books have been written on presentation, on color and shape of the food presented as well as the color, size and shape of the plates used. Let's face it we all eat with our eyes as well as our other senses. Here are some simple presentation ideas:

Cut-out shapes like hearts and squares. Cut-out shapes in cut-out shapes – a heart in the top piece of a heart shaped slice of bread to expose the sandwich filling. I have taken white bread and cut out a clover leaf shape then filled that space with a clover leaf shape of dark bread, and vice versa.

Simple use of a slice of say cucumber or radish on top of the sandwich to indicate what type filling is inside. A sprig of fresh herb, such as thyme, rosemary, dill, cilantro, parsley or sage or a decorative cut-out of carrot, pepper, lemon, lime on top of the sandwich. A hot dog roll cut into quarters and presented as mini lobster or shrimp rolls. The use of a variety of shapes and sizes of serving plates and platters finishes the presentation.

To keep tea sandwiches fresh, once assembled, cover with a damp paper or tea towel and refrigerate until ready to present. Most tea sandwiches can only be prepared one to two hours in advance, so remember, they are the last thing assembled. They can be presented on plates, stands, baskets, platters of all

shapes and sizes as well as on large wooden cutting boards. Whatever you do, use your imagination and have fun.

## *TEA SANDWICH RECIPES*

### **Tarragon & Cucumber Flower Canapes**

3.5 ounces (approximately 7 tablespoons) salted butter, room temperature  
1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh tarragon  
1 teaspoon white wine vinegar  
1 teaspoon finely chopped parsley  
1teaspoon fresh lemon zest  
1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
8 slices firm white sandwich bread, frozen  
64 paper-thin slices English cucumber with peel  
Garnish: fresh lemon zest

In a small bowl, stir together butter, tarragon, vinegar, parsley, lemon zest and pepper until well blended.

Using a 1¾ inch square cutter cut 2 squares out of each slice of frozen bread, discarding scraps. You should have 16 squares of bread.

Spread each bread square base with a thin layer of butter. Now fold each cucumber slice in half and then in quarters. Pinch the inner fold of each cucumber slice between thumb and forefinger, and place on bread square, green edge up. Repeat 3 times per canape. Arrange folds to resemble a flower.

Garnish cucumber flowers with lemon zest in centers, if desired. Cover with damp paper towels, and let bread thaw completely, approximately 30 minutes. Serve immediately.

### **Egg Salad & Watercress Sandwich**

12 slices very thin white bread  
Butter at room temperature  
5-6 hardboiled eggs, cooled and peeled

4 tablespoons good quality mustard  
4 tablespoons mayonnaise  
½ teaspoon grated lemon zest  
Handful of watercress  
Salt and pepper

Trim the bread slices and then spread with the soft butter.  
Grate the eggs on a box grater, large grate side.  
Place the grated eggs, seasonings mustard and mayonnaise and lemon zest into a large bowl. Gently fold everything together.  
Spoon on to six slices of the bread and spread out to the edges. Top with watercress and the remaining bread slices and press down slightly to seal. Cut on the diagonal or into fingers and serve. Makes 18 to 24 tea sandwiches

### **Corned Beef Tea Sandwich with Mustard Butter**

½ cup butter, softened  
2 tablespoons spicy brown mustard  
2 teaspoons dill pickle relish  
6 slices oatmeal bread  
16 thin slices deli top round corned beef  
Garnish – sliced cornichons

In a small bowl, combine butter, mustard, and relish, stir well.

Spread butter mixture onto 1 side of each bread slice. Place 4 slices of corned beef, in ruffle pattern on buttered side of two bread slices. Top each with a buttered bread slice, butter side down. Now spread each bread slice with more butter mixture. Again, top each with 4 slices of corned beef, in ruffle pattern. Top each with remaining bread slice, butter side down.

Using a sharp, serrated knife, cut crusts from sandwiches; cut each sandwich in half and then each half into 4 pieces, giving you 8 small tea sandwiches each. Garnish each sandwich with a slice of cornichon and secure with a frilled toothpick.

## **Cucumber-Mint Tea Sandwich**

1 large cucumber, peeled and thinly sliced  
Salt and white pepper  
16 thin slices white bread  
1 stick (1/2 cup) unsalted butter, softened  
16 fresh mint leaves

Sprinkle the cucumber slices with salt and pepper and set aside in a colander for 10 minutes so any excess liquid can drain out. Pat dry with paper towels and lay on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper. Set aside.

Using a 2-inch cookie cutter, cut 2 rounds from each slice of bread; coat each circle on one side with a very thin layer of butter.

Lay the cucumber slices on top of the buttered side to 16 bread rounds. Add a tiny dab of butter and top with a mint leaf. Place another bread round on top, butter side down, and press the sandwiches together gently. Serve immediately or refrigerate, wrapped in plastic, until ready to serve or for up to 3 hours.  
NOTE: If you want the mint leaf to show through, cut a 1-inch round out of the top circle of bread before placing it on the sandwich. Makes 16 sandwiches.

## **Smoked Salmon and Chive Cream Cheese Sandwich**

12 thin slices pumpernickel bread  
8 ounces sliced smoked salmon  
½ cup chive-cream cheese spread  
2 tablespoons chopped fresh chives

Using a 2-inch round cookie cutter, cut 2 circles from each slice of bread; using the same cookie cutter, cut 12 circles from the smoked salmon.

Spread the cream cheese mixture on half the bread circle and then top with a piece of salmon and another circle of bread. Press down gently and serve immediately or refrigerate, wrapped in plastic, until ready to serve or for up to 3 hours. Makes 12 sandwiches

## **Roast Beef and Pear Chutney Tea Sandwich**

12 thin slices wheat bread  
8 ounces deli sliced roast beef  
½ cup store bought pear chutney

Using a 2-inch wide heart-shaped cookie cutter cut 2 hearts from each slice of bread, set aside. Using the same cookie cutter, cut 12 heart shapes out of the roast beef.

Spread half the bread pieces with a thin layer of pear chutney. Place the roast beef slices on top of the chutney. Add a dab of chutney on top of the roast beef, and top with the remaining bread hearts. Press down gently and serve immediately or refrigerate, wrapped in plastic, until ready to serve or for up to 3 hours. Makes 12 sandwiches

## **Blue Cheese, Walnut, and Pear Tea Sandwiches**

½ stick (4 tablespoons) unsalted butter, softened  
6 thin slices whole-grain bread, crusts trimmed  
¼ cup cream cheese, softened  
2 tablespoons crumbled blue cheese  
½ cup finely chopped walnuts, toasted  
½ ripe pear, cored and thinly sliced

Butter one side of each slice of bread. Combine the cream cheese and blue cheese in a small bowl and mash until soft and well combined. Divide the cheese mixture among 3 of the bread slices and spread to cover the slice. Sprinkle nuts on top of the cheese and then add a layer of pear slices. Top with the remaining bread slices, butter side down and press down gently. Cut each sandwich into 4 square or 4 fingers. Serve immediately or refrigerate, wrapped in plastic, until ready to serve or for up to 3 hours. Makes 12 tea sandwiches

## **Chicken Salad and Nectarine Tea Sandwiches**

3 large nectarines

3 cups cooked chicken chunks (a store bought roasted chicken works well here)  
1 small red onion, thinly sliced  
1/3 cup store-bought poppy-seed dressing  
5 cups mixed greens, chopped  
½ cup chopped walnuts, toasted  
3 large pitas

Cut the nectarines into ½-inch dice and place them in a large bowl. Add the chicken chunks and the sliced onion. Toss with about ½ of the bottle dressing, enough to coat. Cover and chill for at least 15 minutes and for up to 2 hours.

When ready to serve, add the chopped greens and the toasted walnuts to the chicken salad and toss to coat. Add additional dressing, as needed. Just prior to serving, quarter the pitas, and spoon some salad into the pita quarters and serve.

### **Mini Lobster Rolls**

12 ounces cooked, shelled lobster meat or chopped cooked/shelled shrimp  
½ cup good mayonnaise  
½ cup very finely diced celery  
1 tablespoon minced fresh dill, more to garnish  
Salt and white pepper  
8 hot dog rolls

Combine the lobster and/or shrimp, mayonnaise, celery and dill with the salt and pepper to taste. Trim the ends of each hot dog roll and then cut each bun in half. If desired, you can toast the rolls. When ready to serve, spoon some of the lobster or shrimp salad into each roll section, top with a little sprig of dill and serve. Makes 16 rolls

### **Roast Beef, Swiss cheese, & Apple Open-face Tea Sandwich**

6 slices good Rye Bread  
6 slices deli Roast Beef – rare  
6 slices deli Swiss cheese  
2 apples, cored and sliced thin  
¼ cup unsalted butter, softened  
½ cup creamed horseradish

Curly parsley to garnish

Slice each piece of rye bread into thirds. Spread a thin layer of butter on each finger. Slice the roast beef into thirds and do the same with the Swiss cheese. Slice the apple thinly into 16 slices.

Place a piece of roast beef on each buttered finger, top with a coating of the creamed horseradish. Now place a slice of the Swiss cheese on top of the roast beef and then place a slice of apple on top of the cheese. Place a dab of the creamed horseradish on top of the apple and garnish with a sprig of the parsley. Serve immediately or refrigerate, covered with a damp towel, for up to 3 hours. Makes 16 tea finger open-faced sandwiches

## *SWEETS*

One of the best parts of a Tea Party is a tiered platter of delicious and delicate sweets. After the scones, after the tea sandwiches, there is always a little room left for these sweets. They are mostly bite-size and come in an assortment of flavors and sizes. Most are considered finger-food while others require the use of a small spoon. However they are presented, they are considered by some to be the best part of the afternoon tea.

Many of the sweets presented for a tea are derived from a regular cake recipe except the serving sizes are miniature. These shapes are made using a variety of cookie cutters, small round, square and oval cutting dies and just slicing a sheet cake into smaller portions. One of the best parts of preparing these delights is that they can be made days in advance and frozen, then trimmed down and iced or decorated.

Many groceries today carry a variety of fillings for small tarts like lemon curd, raspberry and blackberry fillings as well as assorted jam and chutneys that can be used. Some stores even carry pre-made mini tarts, thus making it easier to prepare them.

The following are some recipes I think you will enjoy serving your guests.

## *TEA PARTY SWEET RECIPES*

### **LEMON CHEESECAKES**

3/4 cup graham cracker crumbs  
1/3 cup plus 1 tablespoon sugar  
3 tablespoons salted butter, melted  
1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese, softened  
1 tablespoon all-purpose flour  
1 teaspoon fresh lemon zest  
3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice  
2 tablespoons heavy whipping cream  
¼ teaspoon vanilla extract  
1 large egg  
Garnish: Candied Lemon Slices (recipe follows)

Preheat the oven to 350-degrees.

Lightly spray a 12 well mini cheesecake pan with removable bottoms with nonstick spray. Set aside.

In a small bowl, combine graham cracker crumbs, 1 tablespoon sugar, and the melted butter, stirring to blend. Divide crumb mixture evenly among wells of prepared pan, pressing firmly to create a level base. Bake until golden brown, 6 to 7 minutes. Let cool completely.

In a medium bowl, combine cream cheese, remaining 1/3 cup sugar, flour, lemon zest, lemon juice, cream and vanilla extract. Beat at high speed with a mixer until smooth. Add egg, beating a low speed just until incorporated; divide mixture evenly among well of prepared pan. Bake cheesecakes until set and slightly puffed, approximately 11 minutes. Let cool completely in pan.

Wrap pan well and refrigerate until cold, approximately 4 hours. Remove cheesecakes from pan and just before serving, garnish each with a candied lemon slice, if desire. Note: Cheesecakes can be made a week in advance, wrapped

securely in plastic wrap and frozen. Let that completely before garnishing. Makes 12 mini lemon cheesecakes

### **CANDIED LEMON SLICES**

1 cup water  
1 cup sugar  
12 thin slices of lemon, 1 ½ to 2 inch in diameter

In a medium saucepan, combine water and sugar over high heat. Cook and stir until sugar dissolves. Add lemon slices, and reduce heat to a very low simmer. Cook until lemon slices are candied (translucent) 3 – 5 minutes. Transfer lemon slices and syrup to a covered container and refrigerate until needed. Lightly blot on paper towels prior to using.

### **OREO COOKIES BALLS**

42 Oreo cookies  
8 oz. cream cheese, softened  
16 oz. semisweet chocolate chips, melted

Place cookies in a sealed zip-closed plastic bag and finely crush with a rolling pin. Reserve ¼ cup cookie crumbs. Mix remaining crumbs and cream cheese until blended. Shape the cream cheese mixture into (1-inch) round cookie balls; freeze for 10 to 15 minutes on a shallow baking sheet lined with parchment paper.

Place 8 oz. chocolate chips in a microwaveable bowl. Microwave on medium power 1 minute, then stir, continue heating, stirring every 30 seconds in between, until chocolate is completely melted. Repeat for remaining chocolate chips. Add balls, in batches, to bowl of melted chocolate. Use 2 forks to roll balls in chocolate until evenly coated. Remove balls with forks, letting excess chocolate drip back into bowl, and then return them to the lined cookie sheet. Garnish with reserved cookie crumbs. Makes about 34 cookie balls

## **BIRDS NESTS PETIT FOURS**

1¾ cups all-purpose flour  
½ teaspoon baking powder  
½ teaspoon fine sea salt  
1 cup salted butter, softened  
1 cup granulated sugar  
4 large eggs  
¼ cup crème fraiche  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
White Chocolate icing (recipe follows)  
Garnish: green coconut and jelly beans

Preheat oven to 350-degrees. Spray a 13 x 9-inch pan with baking spray. Line pan with parchment paper.

In medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder and salt. In large bowl, beat together butter and sugar with a mixer at high speed until thick and creamy, approximately 3 minutes. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Add crème fraiche and vanilla extract, beating until well blended. Add flour mixture to butter mixture, beating at low speed just until blended. Spread batter into prepared pan and using an offset spatula, smooth top of batter to make a flat surface.

Bake until a wooden pick inserted in center of cake comes out clean, 23 to 25 minutes. Let cool completely in pan on a wire rack. Wrap cake in pan with plastic wrap, and let sit at room temperature for a day. After sitting for a day, unwrap cake and turn out onto a cutting surface. Remove parchment paper.

Using a serrated knife, or electric knife, cut 24 (1½ inch) cake squares from cake, avoiding edges. Place cake squares on a wire rack set over a rimmed baking sheet. Pour White Chocolate icing over cake squares, covering completely. If needed, use a small offset spatula to spread icing. (If necessary, excess icing that pools on rimmed baking sheet can be scraped off, reheated, and reused.) Top each cake square with green coconut, if desired. Refrigerate cake squares on wire rack until icing sets, approximately 2 hours. Once icing sets, trim any excess icing on bottom of cakes and transfer cake squares to an airtight container, and

refrigerate until ready to serve. Garnish with some small jelly beans, if desired, to create the eggs in a nest appearance. *Kitchen Tip: to make green coconut, place sweetened coconut flakes, 1 teaspoon water, and several drops liquid green food coloring in a large releasable plastic bag and shake.*

## **WHITE CHOCOLATE ICING**

6 cups confectioners' sugar  
½ cup water  
2 tablespoons light corn syrup  
¼ teaspoon vanilla extract  
¾ cup white chocolate chips

In the top of a double boiler, whisk together confectioners' sugar, ½ cup water, corn syrup and vanilla extract until well blended. Cook over simmering water until a candy thermometer registers 90-degrees. Add white chocolate chips stirring until melted and smooth. Keep warm over steaming water, use immediately.

## **FRUIT SHOTS**

3 cups honeydew melon balls (approximately 1 small honeydew)  
3 cup seedless watermelon balls (approximately 1 small seedless watermelon)  
3 cups cantaloupe balls (approximately 1 small cantaloupe)  
1 recipe Honeybush Tea-Infused Simple Syrup (recipe follows)

Toss melon balls slightly in syrup; then slide a ball of each kind of melon onto desired decorative skewer. Place in a small shot glass.

Fill each glass with approximately 1 tablespoon Honeybush Tea-Infused Simple Syrup. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

## **HONEYBUSH TEA-INFUSED SIMPLE SYRUP**

3 cups water  
2 cups sugar  
2 bags (.085-ounce) Tazo Flowering Honeybush Herbal Tea

½ teaspoon vanilla bean paste or vanilla bean extract

In a small saucepan, combine water and sugar. Cook over medium-high heat until mixture boils. Reduce heat and simmer until slightly thickened, approximately 15 minutes. Remove from heat and add tea bags and vanilla and steep for 15 minutes. Remove and discard tea bags and stir mixture. Refrigerate 1 hour prior to use.

### **BAKED CHERRY HEART TARTS**

1 (10-ounce) package frozen cherries, thawed  
¼ cup sugar  
2 tablespoons cold water  
1 tablespoon cornstarch  
1 (14.1 ounce) package prepared pie dough (2 sheets)  
1 large egg yolk  
2 tablespoons water  
2 tablespoons coarse sanding sugar

In a small saucepan, combine cherries and sugar. Cook over medium heat, stirring often, until sugar is dissolved, approximately 10 minutes. Meanwhile, in a small bowl, whisk together water and cornstarch. Add cornstarch mixture to cherry mixture. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly, and continue to cook until mixture thickens, 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from heat and cool completely.

Preheat oven to 450-degrees. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper, set aside.

Using a rolling pin on a lightly floured surface, flatten dough slightly. Using a 4-inch heart-shaped cutter, cut as many hearts as possible. You need to have an even number, one for the top and one for the bottom of the tarts. In a small bowl whisk together egg yolk and water to form an egg wash. Using a pastry brush, lightly coat a 1-inch border on half of the dough hearts. Place approximately 1½ tablespoons of cherry mixture in centers of dough hearts brushed with egg wash. Top with remaining dough hearts and using a fork, press gently to seal edges.

Transfer to prepared baking sheet; brush tops of hearts with remaining egg wash and sprinkle with sanding sugar. Bake until golden brown, approximately 20 minutes. Remove from oven and cool prior to serving.

## **BLUEBERRY-BASIL TARTLETS**

¼ cup honey  
12 mini-shortbread, pre-made tartlet shells  
¼ cup plain Greek yogurt  
1/3 cup fresh washed and dried blueberries  
Garnish: 12 small basil leaves

In a microwave-proof bowl, heat honey in the microwave at low power until it is the consistency of syrup.

Fill the pre-made tartlet shells with some of the yogurt, using a small offset spatula to smooth tops.

Toss blueberries in warm hone and arrange 5 to 7 blueberries on top of yogurt layer in each tartlet shell. Garnish each tartlet with a small fresh basil leaf, if desired. Makes 12 tartlets

## **APPLE BLOSSOMS**

3 honey crisp apples, sliced in half top to bottom, cored  
Juice from 1 lemon  
1 package croissant dough in sheet form (Pillsbury dough sheets)  
Scant ¼ cup apricot preserves  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
Powdered sugar for garnish sprinkle

Preheat your oven to the temperature on the back of the pastry sheet package.

Do not peel the apples, slice in half top to bottom and using a melon baller, remove the seed pocket. Slice the apples thin with a mandolin, about 1/6 of an

inch. Place in a bowl and cover with water and the juice of a lemon. Microwave for 4 – 6 minutes, until the apple slices bend easily without snapping.

Roll out the croissant sheet over a surface sprinkled with a little flour. Use a rolling pin to make it then. Cut dough in half vertically and then four times horizontally (to create 8 strips)

Place the apricot preserves in a small bowl and add a splash of water. Microwave for 1 minute and whisk together. Using a pastry brush, brush the apricot preserves onto the dough. Now, carefully line the apple slices, overlapping slightly, at the top of each dough slice. They should be peeking slightly over the top of the dough. Sprinkle with cinnamon and then fold the bottom edge of the dough over the apples. The apples should still be peeking out slightly. Roll the dough pieces inwards, creating spirals. Place into greased muffin tin and bake for 10 – 15 minutes, until dough is golden brown. Remove from oven, allow to cool 10 minutes then sprinkle with powdered sugar. Makes 8 apple blossom roses

## **SIMPLE CRÈME BRULEES**

(You will need 12 of the 3 oz. size ramekins to make this recipe. Make sure the ramekins are suitable for baking.)

1 cup heavy cream  
1 cup half and half  
2 tablespoons sugar  
1 teaspoon vanilla  
3 egg yolks  
1 whole egg – room temperature  
¼ cup sugar  
Pinch of salt

Warm together the cream, half and half, sugar and vanilla in a saucepan over medium heat just until steam rises – DO NOT BOIL.

In a mixing bowl, whisk together the yolks, the whole egg, ¼ cup of the sugar and a pinch of salt. Combine both mixtures and divide among the 12 ramekins. Arrange the ramekins in a large baking dish filled with ¼ inch hot water. (See note

below) Carefully transfer the baking dish to the oven. Bake the custards 20-30 minutes or until just set. The centers will jiggle slightly with a touch of the finger. Do not overcook.

Remove the ramekins from the dish and let cool. When cool enough to handle, wrap each in plastic wrap and chill until completely cold or overnight. Remove any moisture with a paper towel when you un-wrap them and sprinkle with cinnamon sugar or nutmeg prior to serving. You can add fresh raspberries, blueberries or strawberries to the top, if desired.

\*Note: It is easier to place the ramekins in the baking dish and place the baking dish on an oven rack partially pulled out, then gently pour in the hot water. Use an oven mitt to remove the ramekins when done baking since they will be very hot.

## **LAVENDER-ORANGE CAKE WITH BLACKBERRY CREAM**

1 (15.25 ounce) box yellow cake mix  
4 large eggs  
½ cup vegetable oil  
½ teaspoon vanilla extract  
1 cup sour cream  
½ cup warm water  
1 (3.4 ounce) box French vanilla instant pudding mix  
2 tablespoons fresh orange zest  
1 teaspoon culinary lavender  
1 recipe Blackberry Cream (recipe follows)  
Garnish – orange peel curls, lavender sprigs

Preheat oven to 350-degrees

Spray an 18 x 11 inch rimmed baking sheet with cooking spray. Line with parchment paper, and spray again.

In a large mixing bowl, combine cake mix, eggs, oil, vanilla extract, sour cream, water and pudding mix. Beat at low speed with a mixer until blended. Increase mixer speed to medium, and beat for 2 minutes. Add orange zest and culinary

lavender, fold into cake mix. Spread batter into prepared pan. Bake until a wooden pick inserted in the center of cake comes out clean, 15 to 17 minutes. Let cool completely in pan.

Cut cake into 2 (13 x 9-inch) portions. Spread Blackberry Cream onto one cake portion, and top with remaining cake portion (right side up). Freeze for 4 to 6 hours. Remove from freezer and using a sharp knife, trim cake edges to neaten. Cut cake into 12 to 16 pieces. Garnish with orange peel curls and lavender flowers, if desired or just sprinkle with powdered sugar. Serve cold. Makes 12 to 16 pieces

### **BLACKBERRY CREAM**

1 ½ cups cold heavy whipping cream  
1 tablespoon confectioners' sugar  
½ teaspoon vanilla extract  
¼ cup seedless blackberry preserves

In a large bowl combine cream, confectioners' sugar and vanilla extract. Beat at high speed with a mixer until thick and creamy. Add blackberry preserves, beating until blended.

### **MINI BREAD PUDDINGS**

This is a simple dessert item to make. Take any bread pudding recipe and make the pudding, then cool. Now, using a small ice-cream scoop, scoop out some of the pudding and place it in a small round cup. Top with sauce, if desired, and serve. You can, if you wish, reheat the pudding prior to scooping it into the smaller cups or ramekins. Display on a platter with an array of spoons next to it.

### **CHEESECAKE LOLLIPOPS**

3 (8 ounce) packages cream cheese, softened  
¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons sugar  
1/3 cup sour cream

3 tablespoons all-purpose flour  
1½ teaspoons vanilla extract  
¼ teaspoon salt  
3 large eggs  
¾ cup fine graham cracker crumbs  
2½ cups dark chocolate morsels  
24 lollipop sticks

Preheat oven to 350-degrees. Coat a 2-quart baking dish with nonstick spray, set aside.

In a large bowl, beat cream cheese and sugar at medium speed with an electric mixer until smooth. Add sour cream, flour, vanilla and salt, beating until blended. Scrape down side of the bowl. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Pour batter into prepared baking dish.

Bake until center is firm and edges are golden brown, 48 to 50 minutes. Cool on a wire rack for 1 hour. Cover and refrigerate for 4 hour or overnight.

Line a rimmed baking sheet with wax paper or parchment paper. Remove cheesecake from refrigerator and using a small (1-tablespoon) cookie scoop, scoop out rounded balls of the cheesecake. Shape cheesecake portions' by hand, if necessary, to achieve ball shapes. Roll balls in graham cracker crumbs, and place on prepared baking sheet. Push a lollipop stick into each ball. Freeze until balls are firm, approximately 30 to 45 minutes.

Melt chocolate morsels according to package directions. Dip frozen cheesecake lollipops in melt chocolate, coating balls completely. Return to prepared baking sheet. Keep cold until ready to serve. Make 24 cheesecake lollipops

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