

Life Time Learning Presents - How to Host an Afternoon Tea

Let's first discuss the five "W's" of entertaining: The Who, What, When, Where and Why.

1. Who is going to do this?

Are you doing it by yourself or with some else?

2. What are you going to do?

HOST A TEA PARTY!

3. When are you going to do this?

It could be within a week or two; maybe sometime within a month or two; or even later? Remember to pick a date and have a back-up to.

Note: If you have time, a Save-The-Date invite/notice is a good idea

4. Where are you going to do this?

I am planning on holding this at my home. Just need to decide if it will be indoors or outdoors. Be realistic as to place and number of guests expected and facilities available.

5. Why are you doing this?

Because Chef Cal said I could and gave me detailed instruction on how to do it.

ONCE THE ABOVE HAS BEEN ANSWERED YOU CAN NOW DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN. THAT PLAN SHOULD INCLUDE, BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO, THE FOLLOWING:

A time line – how much time do you have to plan, shop, cook and execute?

The guest list – you need to have the names of all those coming, their ages and dietary needs, if any. Are any big eaters? If Children – how old? This information should be factored into your menu plan.

The menu – what are you thinking of serving and can you prepare it yourself or do you need help. Tea cups and tea pots – do you have enough or do you need to purchase and/or borrow some. How about glasses, serving pieces, silverware, tableware, cooking utensils, pots and pans? Do you have recipes or do you need recipes. Remember never host an event using all new/untried recipes. Also remember, the more guests you invite the simpler the menu should be!

Shopping lists – you will need two. The first is for all **non-perishable** items and can be accomplished any time prior to the event. The second is for **perishables**. With this list you must determine how far in advance you can purchase perishable and/or frozen items. Do you have refrigeration/freezer space to store these items?

Since this is a tea that means there is a need for hot/boiling water. How are you going to handle that? Do you have any thermos type containers to keep hot water hot? Do you have a large coffee maker that will keep water hot? Do you have tea pots? Do you plan to use bagged tea or loose tea? Have you remembered that you will need milk, sugar cubes, sweeteners and lemon slices? Do you have serving pieces for all this?

How about seating and table space to display the food? Is this going to be inside or outside? Do you have enough tables and chairs? Are you planning on everyone sitting in the living room/family room? Do you need some small side tables or TV trays? Are you going to allow everyone to serve them self's or are you going to get someone to help you serve?

Let's go back to the menu. Remember we are heartier eaters in the winter months as opposed to the summer months. When doing a tea in the colder months, the general rule of thumb is to serve at least two hot/warm items, maybe one a savory item and the other a sweet item. I recommend for a home tea, five savory and five sweet items plus maybe a large platter of either cheese

or cut-up vegetables. If you are serving scones, don't forget the clotted cream, butter balls and fruit jams. Here's an idea, Butter Boards are all the rage right now, so maybe you could prepare one to go with the scones.

Another thing to consider is when your guests will have eaten last? If the tea is scheduled in the mid-morning, prior to noon, it is possible your guest will be hungry. If it is after noon but not too close to dinner, they will eat less.

In planning the menu, there are several things you need to consider.

How much of what you are going to serve can be prepared ahead of time?
How much has to be done just prior to the event?

How many items need refrigeration?

How many food items require stove/oven time?

Have you cleaned your refrigerator to make room for tea items?

Are you serving anything that will require a utensil?

As for napkins, whatever you think you will need, TRIPLE IT?

NEVER EVER USE DISPOSABLE, PAPER HAND TOWELS IN THE BATHROOM. THEY ACT LIKE SPONGES AND CAN CLOG UP YOUR BATHROOM AFTER ONE OR TWO USES. TRUST ME ON THIS

If using disposable items such as paper plates, plastic utensils, and disposable glasses, then you will need to have someplace, i.e.: trash receptacles, for these items to be disposed in. That means little trash cans scattered around the house. And if you use a lot of disposable items, you are going to need to assign someone to empty the trash container during the party.

Decorations and table settings:

In planning your event, let the season and/or occasion be your guide.

Remember, if you bring in flowers, leaves or other items from outdoors, check them twice to ensure no uninvited little guests get onto your table.

Take into account how you plan to display your food. Everything on the dining table, or some items spread around the room on small tables. To improve the look of the table, try placing some items higher than the others, using either footed platters or various size cakestands. Perhaps placing something under the tablecloth to elevate an attractive serving piece?

Depending on the number of guests, you may want to consider hiring help to keep the food platters replenished and to assist in taking dirty plates and cups into the kitchen.

PARTING GIFTS – MANY HOSTS LIKE TO OFFER THEIR GUESTS A PARTING GIFT, IT COULD BE AS SIMPLE AS A LITTLE GIFT BAG WITH SOME TEA BAGS INSIDE, PERHAPS A COPY OF THE SCONE RECIPE OR MAYBE SOME MINTS. IF YOU COULD FIND IT OR MAYBE EVEN MAKE SOME, A MINI JAR OF THE SAME FLAVOR OF JAM YOU SERVED WOULD BE A UNIQUE IDEA. USE YOUR IMAGINATION TO CREATE SOMETHING YOUR GUESTS WILL REALLY ENJOY.

Some final things to consider:

Parking – do you have enough or do your guests need to park away from your home. Can some of your guests carpool to save parking space?

Do you have a plan for inclement weather?

Perhaps a guest is coming and bringing an infant? Can you accommodate that?

If you have pets what is your plan for them? Locked in the basement? Make sure none of your guests have pet allergies.

Speaking of allergies always ensure that items that contain nuts are so indicated, either by placing a nut on the surface or by a small note indicating this items contains nuts. I would also consider doing this for items containing shellfish.

Do you have a supply of small plastic or paper containers for anyone who would like to take any leftover food home? Do you have enough containers to store any leftover food at your home?

NOW, IF YOU HAVE FOLLOWED ALL I HAVE SAID AND DONE ALL THAT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED, WELL THEN IT'S TIME TO SIT BACK, RELAX AND ENJOY YOUR TEA!

©C. T. Kraft – 2022

Recipes for samples served in class

POTS DE CRÈME

12 ounces semisweet chocolat  chips
4 eggs, at room temperature
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
Pinch of salt
8 ounces very hot strong coffee
1 cup heavy cream
2 tablespoons sugar

Place the chocolate chips in a blender. Crack in the eggs, add the vanilla and salt; pulse 5 to 7 times or until the chocolate chips are partially pulverized.

Now turn on the blender, now pour in the very hot coffee in a steady stream. The coffee will melt the chocolate and turn it into a smooth mixture. Pour this mixture into small mason jars, pretty wineglasses, or demitasse cups.

Place the containers on a tray and refrigerate them for 2 to 3 hours, or until firm. When ready to serve, whip the cream with the sugar and plop it onto the top of each container. Enjoy!

PUMPKIN, RAISIN AND WALNUT BISCOTTI

Non-stick cooking spray
1 box Pillsbury Pumpkin Flavored Quick Bread & muffin mix
  cup unsalted butter, melted
2 eggs, room temperature
1 cup golden raisins,
  cup chopped and toasted walnuts

Heat oven to 350-degrees; coat a baking sheet with non-stick cooking spray or cover with parchment paper.

In a large bowl, combine the quick bread mix, the melted butter and the two eggs. Stir to incorporate, about 25 – 40 strokes with a spoon until mix is moistened and incorporated. Stir in the raisins and walnuts, mix well.

Divide dough in half, equal parts. Shape each half into an 8 by 2 inch loaf on prepared baking sheet. Chill in refrigerator 30 minutes.

Bake the 2 loafs 25 to 30 minutes (I usually bake for 27 minutes) or until light golden brown. Remove from oven and cool on pan for 15 minutes. Now, remove each loaf, one at a time, to a cutting board and cut each into $\frac{3}{4}$ inch slices. Place the slices cut-side down and 1-inch apart on same baking sheet. Bake an additional 8 – 9 minutes, per side, until golden brown. Cool on a wire rack and then store in an air- tight plastic container. They will keep for two weeks. Enjoy!

EGG SALAD & WATERCRESS TEA SANDWICHES

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
 $\frac{1}{2}$ 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

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 or small size dinner rolls

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, either quarter the pitas, and spoon some salad into the pita quarters and serve; or spoon mixture onto split small dinner rolls and serve..