



BEARER OF THE CREST  
THE PRINCIPAL LICENSOR

BRITISH  
*Butler*<sup>®</sup>  
INSTITUTE

HOW TO PREPARE AND SERVE  
ENGLISH AFTERNOON TEA AND HIGH TEA

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LUXURY LEARNING ONLINE



# BRITISH *Butler* INSTITUTE®

REINVENTING LUXURY

## INTRODUCTION

In 1840 Anna Maria Russell the Duchess of Bedford started the tradition of the British meal, afternoon tea, whilst visiting the 5th Duke of Rutland at Belvoir Castle in the mid-1840s. During the 18th century, dinner came to be served later and later in the day until, by the early 19th century, the normal time was between 7.00 and 8.30pm. An extra meal called luncheon had been created to fill the midday gap between breakfast and dinner, but as this new meal was very light, the long afternoon with no refreshment at all left people feeling hungry. She found a light meal of tea (usually Darjeeling) and cakes or sandwiches was the perfect balance. The Duchess found taking an afternoon snack to be such the perfect refreshment that she soon began inviting her friends to join her. Afternoon tea quickly became an established and convivial repast in many middle and upper class households. Afternoon tea was accompanied by luxury ingredient sandwiches, cucumber, egg and cress, fish paste, ham, and smoked salmon, scones with clotted cream and jam, and usually cakes and pastries such as Battenberg cake, fruitcake or Victoria sponge.

## SERVICE

- English afternoon tea can be served anytime from 3.30pm – 6.00pm in the afternoon.
- The modus operandi is light conversation with a dress code of smart casual.
- Place settings are on the table as per the principal's requirements.
- Remember table decoration such as flowers.
- All food is served from the left and cleared from the left and all tea is served from the right and cleared from the right.
- Clear plates and cutlery in between courses and check napkins.
- You can use silverware, but it is better to use bone china.
- Keep an eye on the hot water, milk and fresh tea replenishment.
- Have extra cups, saucers, plates, cutlery and spoons, and replace cups as and when required.
- On the table have clotted-cream which will be presented in a dish within a glass bowl with crushed ice, as well as raspberry and strawberry jams with small serving spoons. Butter will be on the table with a butter knife.
- At the centre of the cover is a fruit plate, which is bigger than a side plate, smaller than a main course plate and is placed 15mm from the table edge.
- On top of the plate is a cocktail napkin folded square and then in half.
- On top of the napkin on the left is pastry fork, with the fork facing up.
- On top of the napkin on the right is the pastry knife with the blade facing in towards the plate.



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- When serving the strawberries and cream you will deliver a desert fork to the left of the plate or bowl and a dessert spoon to the right of the plate or bowl.
- Above the cover plate would be a tea cup, saucer and spoon with the handle of cup to the right and the teaspoon across the top with the spoon end to the left. This is for right-handed guests, if they are left-handed then do the opposite. The teacup is ideally made of bone china.
- The tea set includes the tea strainer with a base, full cream milk in a jug, a pot of boiled water, sliced lemon or lime with a lemon fork or small tongs, white sugar cubes with tongs and a tea pot. Quantity of tea leaves to put in the pot is 1 heaped teaspoon per person and 1 for the pot. So tea for two would require three teaspoons of English Breakfast Tea. Usually tea is poured for the guests by the lady of the house however the butler could do this and the guest adds their own milk and hot water and sugar.
- The language is "*can I temp you...*", "*would you care for...*".
- The first serve of food is the sandwiches, which are silver served. Check with the chef what the fillings are and what butter is used.
- Sandwich fillings include - cucumber, smoked salmon, egg and watercress, cheese and pickles, tuna, roast beef.
- Cucumber should be wafer thin with the skin removed, then placed in a sieve and white vinegar poured over it, gently shaken to remove excess vinegar.
- Crusts are cut off and usually there is a selection of white and brown bread. The shape can be triangular or fingers.
- The second serving is scones and crumpets, which is placed plated on the table with serving tongs. They can also be silver served, and the etiquette when delivering scones is that we do not cut them in half. Crumpets are served hot with butter.
- The third serving is pastries, which are placed plated on the table with serving tongs.
- The Fourth serve is strawberries and clotted cream in a serving dish with serving spoons for the guests to help themselves. This is a very good idea in summer to finish off and is served with cream, castor sugar and a sugar spoon, finely ground black pepper with a tiny pepper spoon and cinnamon with a small serving spoon.

## TRADITIONAL TEA ESTABLISHMENTS

Tea shops started opening all over England as a result of this tradition and eventually the hotels decided to market this as High Tea which is presented in a plated tier with an assortment of the aforementioned food. You will find High Tea the world over with different variations of food and drinks.

*The Ritz London* is famous for its High Tea. To find a traditional tea shop then visit *Bettys* in Harrogate, North Yorkshire, England.



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## TEA VARIETIES

- *Traditional English*: This is a classic blend including Kenyan, Assam and Ceylon teas, blended to provide a gloriously reviving drink that is suitable for any time of day. Best with full cream milk but can be drunk black or with lemon.
- *Traditional Afternoon*: A blend of the finest high – grown Kenyan, Assam and Ceylon teas. Smooth and full flavoured, it is best served during the afternoon. A bracing tea, best served with milk.
- *Earl Grey*: Based on the original Earl Grey recipe, it is a blend of finest oriental teas flavoured with bergamot. It is the bergamot that gives Earl Grey its refreshing taste, making it ideal for drinking at any time of day. Can be drunk black or with a little milk.
- *Lady Grey*: Lady Grey combines a blend of china teas with Seville orange and lemon peel, with a hint of oil of bergamot. Lady Grey can be drunk black or with very little milk to appreciate its delicate refreshing citrus taste.
- *Lemon*: A tang of lemon has been added to fine China tea to produce a very refreshing taste. Best drunk without milk. Lemon provides an ideal light tea to cleanse the palate at breakfast or during the morning.
- *Pure Darjeeling*: Darjeeling is a fine quality tasting tea grown in the foothills of the Himalayas. Known as the “Champagne of teas”, this delicate flavoured tea makes a gentle drink for any time of day, with or without milk.
- *Pure Assam*: A strong tea from the North East of India. Pure Assam has a characteristic bright colour and distinctive malt taste. A vigorous tea to start the day or at any time to feel energized.
- *Pure Ceylon*: A bright, golden coloured tea. A delicious tea suitable to drink throughout the day, it can be drunk with milk or served with lemon.
- *Pure Lapsang Souchong*: From the Fujian province of China, the individual smoky flavour is created from burning oak chippings. A welcome afternoon tea, it is ideal for cleansing the palate.

## PAIRING TEAS WITH APPROPRIATE DISHES

Cucumber and tomato dishes: <i>Ceylon</i>	Ham dishes: <i>Earl Grey</i>
Tomato dishes: <i>Ceylon</i>	Egg and Cress Sandwiches: <i>Darjeeling</i>
Crème Brulee: <i>Earl Grey</i>	Chicken dishes: <i>Lapsang Souchong</i>
Cream Cheese Sandwiches: <i>Darjeeling</i>	Pate: <i>Earl Grey</i>
Smoked Salmon Dishes: <i>Lapsang Souchong</i>	Lemon Based Cakes and Desserts: <i>Ceylon</i>