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l'amuse

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Tea and Cheese Pairings

Looking for alternatives to alcoholic cheese pairings? Want to eat cheese for your afternoon tea? Want to know which of your morning cuppas will go best with your dairy breakfast? Looking to help digest your decadent melty dinner? Betty Koster, master fromager of Fromagerie L'amuse in Amsterdam, has extensively researched the pairings of tea with cheese. Tea cleanses the palate of lingering flavors, warms the mouth, allowing for a clean and warm bed for the cheese aroma and flavors to be fully expressed and enjoyed. While each palate is different, a few of her tips are here to help get you off to a good start for sharing with colleagues and customers.

HISTORY

- Traditions
 - Swiss drink black tea after fondue to aid in digestion
 - Arabs drink tea with all of their meals
- What makes a tea “tea”?
 - Must contain leaves from the *Camelia Sinensis* family, an evergreen shrub native to Asia
 - Green tea – leaves barely dried, hardly bruised that maintain most of color and juices
 - Oolong tea –leaves a little bruised, then dried and rolled
 - Black tea – leaves cut into very small particles (nearly powder) allow for maximum air oxidation
 - White tea – only the upper bud is picked and dried
 - Red tea – Refers to rooibos coming from the South African bush called *Aspalathus linearis*. Originally green, the leaves turn red post fermentation.

THE FUN STUFF

- How should tea be prepared?
 - Filtered or spring water; not mineral water since that will impact flavor
 - Green tea – 80* C, steep 4 minutes
 - White tea – 70* C, steep 4 minutes
 - Oolong tea – 90 – 100* C, steep 5 minutes
 - Black tea – 100* C , steep 5 minutes
- How should tea be served?
 - Wine glasses contain the aroma better to allow for it to play a role in the pairing prior to consumption while setting the tone for this being more than a traditional cuppa.

GUIDE TO SUCCESSFUL CHEESE AND TEA PAIRINGS

Pair like teas with like cheeses. Strong with strong. Delicate with delicate.
Earthy with earthy. You get the idea...

TEA	Notes	CHEESE			
Green	Cheese - Butter; fresh Tea – Floral, lightly astringent	Grassy cheddars (Flory’s, Keen’s)	Taleggio	Epoisses	Fruity goat
Oolong	Cheese – sweet, lactic Tea – Nutty, fruity; more green than black	Caciotta di Capra (washed goat)	Pecorino (any variety)	Terschelling (aged sheep goudas)	Fromage D’affinois
Pu-Ehr (red tea)	Cheese – manly, mineral Tea – Expressive, earthy	Brabander (goat goudas)	Gorgonzola Dolce and Piccante	Nero Fumé (smokey blues)	Brie de Meaux
White Tea	Cheese – fresh, light Tea – floral, fresh	Ricotta	Fresh goat	Buratta	Feta
Black Tea	Cheese – creamy, earthy Tea – dark, astringent	Chiriboga Blue	Delice de Bourgogne	Comté	Parmigiano Reggiano