



Southern Style Sweet Tea

By Erin Fletter

Prep Time 5 / Cook Time 7 / Serves 4 - 6

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

boil: to cook a food in liquid heated to the point of gas bubbles and steam forming (boiling point is 212 F at sea level).

dissolve: to stir an ingredient, like sugar, into another ingredient, like water, until they become one substance; or to melt or liquefy a solid food, such as butter, chocolate, or sugar.

steep: to soak a food, like tea, in water or other liquid so as to bring out its flavor.

Equipment

- ☐ Saucepan, kettle, or microwave for boiling water
- ☐ Pitcher
- ☐ Liquid measuring cup
- ☐ Dry measuring cups
- ☐ Wooden spoon

Ingredients

Southern Style Sweet Tea

- ☐ 4 decaf black tea bags
- ☐ 4 C hot water
- ☐ 3/4 C granulated sugar
- ☐ 2 C cold water
- ☐ ice

Food Allergen Substitutions

Southern Style Sweet Tea

Instructions

Southern Style Sweet Tea

boil + dissolve

Boil **4 cups of water**. When the water is boiling, add **3/4 cup of sugar** and stir until sugar has dissolved, forming a simple syrup. Once the sugar has dissolved, turn off the heat.

steep + cool

Add **4 bags of decaf black tea** to the simple syrup, swirling them around as the tea begins to steep in the liquid. Let the tea bags steep for 5 to 10 minutes, then remove them and carefully pour the tea into a pitcher. Add **2 cups of cold water**, then serve over ice!

Featured Ingredient: Tea!

Hi, I'm Tea!

"I'm a drink made from plant parts, like leaves and flowers. I like to think I'm sweet enough, but some tea drinkers like to add honey or sugar to me, and some add milk to black tea to cool it down. You can drink tea hot or iced!"

History

The history of tea began in China as far back as 5,000 years ago.

An old Chinese legend says a man was out walking one day when he accidentally tasted the juices from a tea plant leaf. He thought it tasted great and felt the tea had unique medicinal properties.

Another legend suggests it was a mythical emperor called Shennong who discovered tea when a tea blossom fell into a cup of hot water he was drinking.

At that time, tea was drunk fresh with the new leaves being mixed with hot water. In those days, the tea leaves were not allowed to oxidize (to combine with oxygen, causing darker leaves), so the leaves remained green. It was only later that oolong and black or red teas were developed. Black tea is fully oxidized, and oolong is semi-oxidized.

Tea drinking grew in popularity and became a pastime for the rich. Fine teas were only available to those who could afford them, and green teas were even used as currency.

Elaborate tea ceremonies developed involving large sets of tea-making equipment. Tea houses sprung up, and tea connoisseurs prided themselves on the quality of their leaves and their tea-making skills.

In the 1600s, merchants brought tea to Europe and the United States. Since then, tea drinking has blossomed.

Tea is the most-consumed beverage on the planet, other than water. It is even more popular than coffee and cola!

China is the largest producer of tea, followed by India and Kenya.

Anatomy & Etymology

Tea comes from the cured or fresh leaves of the *Camellia sinensis* plant, an evergreen growing mainly in warmer and humid climates.

Although the plants can grow up to 52 feet, they are usually kept no higher than waist level to make picking the tender leaves at the top easier.

Tea should be kept dry and stored in an airtight container, away from light and heat if possible. Black teas last longer than green teas. Teas made from flowers have an even shorter shelf life.

The word "tea" comes from the mid-17th century Malay "teh" or the Chinese (Min) "te."

How to Buy & Use

Tea can be purchased in various forms. Tea bags are often used today; however, you can still buy loose tea. Cans and bottles of brewed tea, sweetened or unsweetened, are also available, with fruit flavors sometimes added to the tea.

Crushed tea leaves and brewed tea can be used in savory and sweet recipes.

Herbal teas are made from the various parts of edible plants, including fresh or dried flowers, fruit, roots, or seeds.

Nutrition

Teas from the *Camellia sinensis* plant (white, green, oolong, and black) have high levels of antioxidants which help prevent cancer. Flavonoids in tea help heart health by lowering blood pressure and cholesterol. Another health benefit of tea is improving gut health by promoting good bacteria and inhibiting harmful bacteria.

Teas from the leaves of the *Camellia sinensis* plant contain varying amounts of caffeine. Black tea has the most, followed by oolong, green, and white.

Most herbal teas do not contain caffeine; however, they are not necessarily more healthy than black tea. Always check for plant allergies and herb and drug interactions before ingesting herbal teas.