

# Suggested Tea Specific *ActiviTeas*

Tea is a healthy, multi-sensory all natural product whose use spans centuries and countless cultures. Brewing a simple cup of tea can engage students in virtually any subject ranging from history, biology, ecology, geography and more. The following is a suggested start to a potential long productive use of the simple tealeaf as educational tool limited only by the imagination of the teacher involved.

Information can be gathered from Tea 101 and Tea 102 packets and resources listed on [www.indonique.com/t42\\_Educational\\_Packets](http://www.indonique.com/t42_Educational_Packets). *Teacher sampler kits are available online at [www.indonique.com/t42\\_teacher\\_sampler](http://www.indonique.com/t42_teacher_sampler).*

## **Grades K-2**

1. Have students draw a picture of the tea plant and color and name the parts of the plant.
2. Have tea party and children can dress up during story time. See suggested readings at [www.indonique.com/t42\\_Educational\\_Packets](http://www.indonique.com/t42_Educational_Packets)

## **Grades K-12**

1. Have students compare the tealeaves of a white, green, oolong and black tea. Compare and contrast the size, shape, color, smell, etc.
2. Have students place the tealeaves in a cup and add warm to hot water (be careful) and watch the tealeaves unfurl. Compare and contrast different types of tea after it is infused.
3. Have students differentiate infused tea leaves by comparing and contrasting between a white, green, oolong and black tea based on infusion time, color, smell and taste.
4. Discuss and draw some of the varied ecosystems where tea grows. What animals live there?

## **Grades 3-12**

1. Have students try to differentiate between white, green, oolong and black teas, and eventually between different regions. Have them use the glossary from [www.indonique.com/tea\\_glossary](http://www.indonique.com/tea_glossary) to describe the flavors and scents of the tea.
2. Discuss the role of tea in the Boston Tea Party. Why was tea the focal point of a tax and taxation without representation revolt? What were the economic implications of the tea tax and subsequent Parliamentary acts.

The Tea Act of 1775 was reviled by colonists, not only because it placed a tax on tea without representation, but, it threatened the lively hood of many influential colonist who profited greatly from the legal and black market trade in tea. Especially damaging to colonial interests was the requirement that all tea was to be sold directly from and only from East India Company ships without heavy duties. Facing financial ruin, many donned native American dress and dumped said company tea into harbor in Boston and throughout the colonies in successive months.

3. Tea was first used in China millennia ago but only reached Europe in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, why? Why didn't Marco Polo bring tea back to Europe? What events finally brought tea to Europe?

The far east became accessible to Europe only after Vasco Da Gama made his historic trek around the Cape of Good Hope, Africa, and entered the Indian ocean. Before then, the land route to Asia was long, dangerous, expensive and uneconomical. Marco Polo, the first traveler to China to write extensively of the trek did not return with tea and probably did not have it in China. Twenty five years prior to his arrival, Mongolian Hordes under the leadership of Genghis Khan killed a third of China's population in a campaign that seized control of all of China. Tea was not a part of their culture.

4. How did the spread of Buddhism also spread tea throughout Asia?

Tea was used in some Buddhist ceremonies and traveled with Buddhist monks throughout Asia.

5. Discuss what was the impact of tea on English society. (Switching from alcoholic beverages, boiling water, Coffee/Tea houses and democracy, antioxidants, the tea break, marketing a new product, etc...)

Water born diseases, not understood by physicians of the day, were very common in pre 20<sup>th</sup> century Europe. The safer alternative was ale, beer and wine with its equally dangerous effects. The introduction of tea made with safe boiled water was the healthiest contribution to improving the human condition in its day. Along with coffee, its popularity led to a boom in the coffee and teashop business where, for a penny, anyone could enter, regardless of rank, and socialize. News pamphlets were distributed in these shops and quickly became known as newspapers as we know of them today. Tea was one of the first new products in centuries to help establish the advertising business as we know it. So popular were coffee/tea shops that King Charles attempted to close them as houses of sedition where rank was ignored and outright antigovernment talk was common. This edict was ignored and rescinded days later.

6. What made tea acceptable and even desirable in England?

The restoration of the English monarchy after the death of Lord Cromwell brought Charles II to the throne in 1660. He had been exiled to Holland, Europe's first tea drinking nation, where he acquired a taste for the beverage. He married Catherine De Braganza of Portugal, the only other tea-drinking nation in Europe, shortly thereafter. Tea was suddenly popular.

7. How did English tea drinking lead to the Opium Wars and the expansion of the British Empire?

The Chinese maintained a monopoly on tea production for 200 years and demanded payment in silver of the ever more addicted English tea totallers. Efforts to establish international banking terms with China failed and the silver drain in England threatened financial disaster. The English decided, through brokers, to grow opium in India and sell it in China for silver. This silver was used to buy tea and other goods. Financial disaster avoided. Unfortunately, 6 million Chinese citizens, and a goodly number of Englishmen, became addicted to cheap Indian opium forcing the emperor to forbid its trade. England again faced with economic ruin, sent in the gunboats in the first opium war to restore the trade. They were victorious and after a second war over opium a few years later, experienced a dramatic territorial expansion of the Empire. Sadly, throughout it all, tea was discovered growing wild in Assam, India.

8. Regarding the crop/plant: Why do plants, like tea have caffeine? Why do Darjeelings cost so much more than Assams?

Darjeelings are picked only during three seasons and can produce only 1/20 the amount of tea per acre that an Assam region can grow. Assams also grow year round.

9. What American invention supercharged the trade of tea and other goods from Asia to the West?

The Clipper ship, an early 19<sup>th</sup> century American design, dramatically reduced transport time between Asian and European and American ports. English tax laws prohibited competing designs being built in England. Most Clippers eventually abandoned the tea trade in favor of transporting passengers to California during the Gold Rush. The Cutty Sark, is one of very few Clipper ships still in existence.