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JAN/FEB 2009

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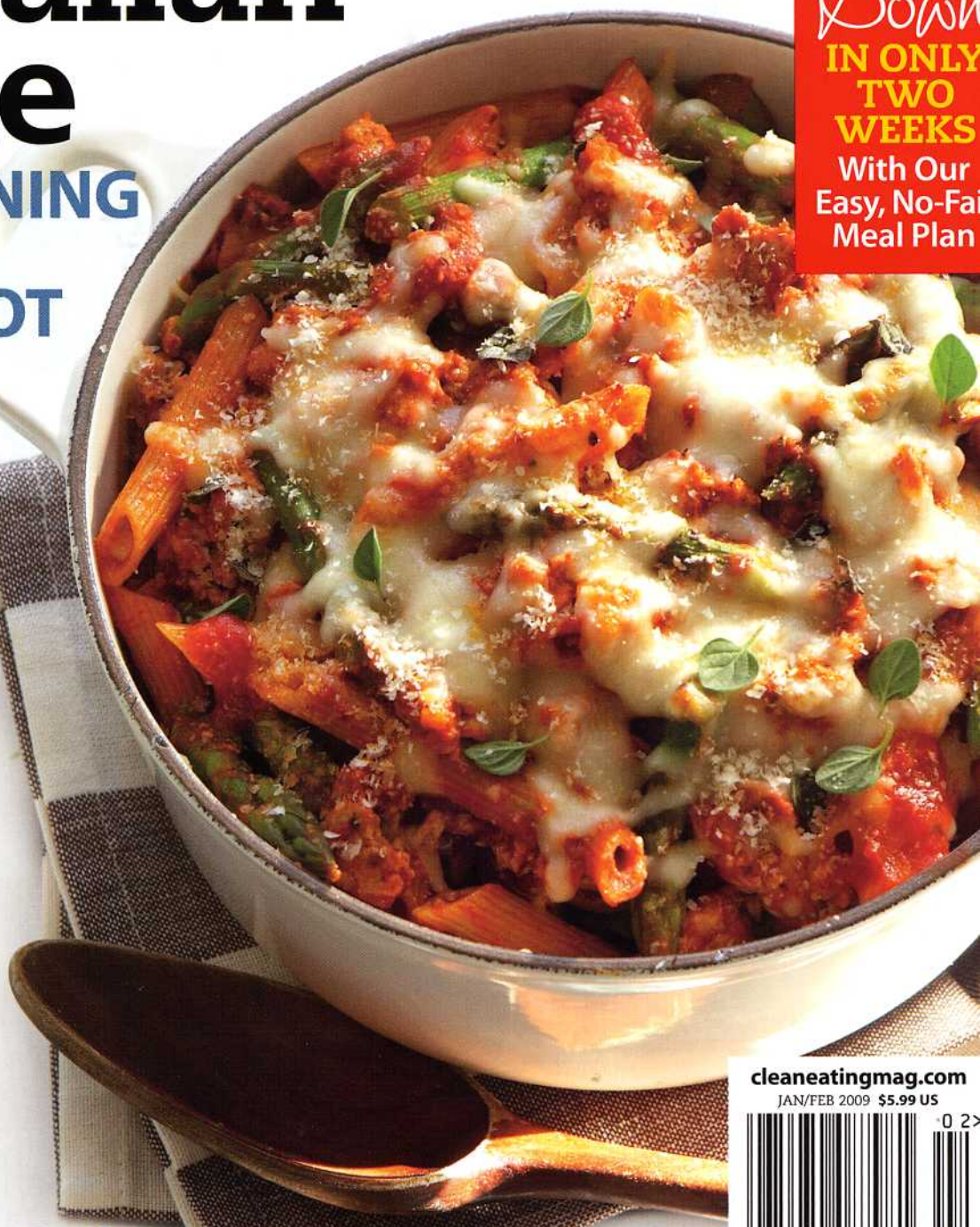
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Let's Talk About Tea

A CE FAVORITE

Green Tea Super Antioxidant

yogitea.com

Several green teas are a bit too bitter for some palates, but not so with this aromatic blend. Brew up a pot in the morning, sip a cup or two during the day and then refrigerate the leftovers for refreshing iced tea.

Take the time to savor a spot of tea. It not only tastes good – it's good for you. (Still awaiting word on the crumpets.) BY PEGGY HALL

The ancient Chinese really knew what they were doing. Thanks to their discovery of brewing and drinking *Camellia sinensis* or tea leaves, we in the modern world are reaping the health benefits of this 5,000 year-old tradition. Long before the advent of clinical trials and peer-reviewed studies, the Chinese recognized the

medicinal benefits of tea, using it to ward off colds, soothe sore throats, increase energy and calm anxiety. Although most of us clean eaters already know that a cozy cup of tea simply makes us feel better, there's now a plethora of promising proof to support those centuries-old claims. "Some observational studies suggest optimal health benefits from

consuming four to five cups of tea daily," says Jeffrey Blumberg, PhD, professor of nutrition at Tufts University. "But even one cup of tea a day can make a difference." Research has shown that drinking tea may reduce the risk of arthritis, cardiovascular disease, cavities, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease, osteoporosis and some forms of cancer.



PHOTO FROM JUPITERIMAGES

Tea contains high levels of polyphenols such as tannins and catechins (also present in wine and chocolate), which have antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, anti-carcinogenic and anti-viral properties.

Although green tea has been making headlines lately, Blumberg says that most data show more similarities than differences between green, black and white teas, all of which are derived from the same plant. So if you can't get accustomed to the taste of green tea, don't worry: He recommends that consumers seek a variety in their diet, which will provide a diversity of aroma, color and flavor. "Tea has essentially no calories, is rich in antioxidants, presents a remarkable variety of delightful aromas and flavors that can complement any meal, and may reduce your risk of some chronic diseases," says Blumberg. "What more can anyone ask?"

Reading Between the Leaves

Black, green and white varieties of tea come from the Camellia sinensis plant and thus are "true" teas; herbal infusions are not actually teas at all, though they are brewed and enjoyed as such.

BLACK: The tea leaves are withered, fully oxidized and dried. Black tea has the most robust flavor and the highest amount of caffeine, about 40 milligrams per cup (approximately half the amount present in a cup of coffee).

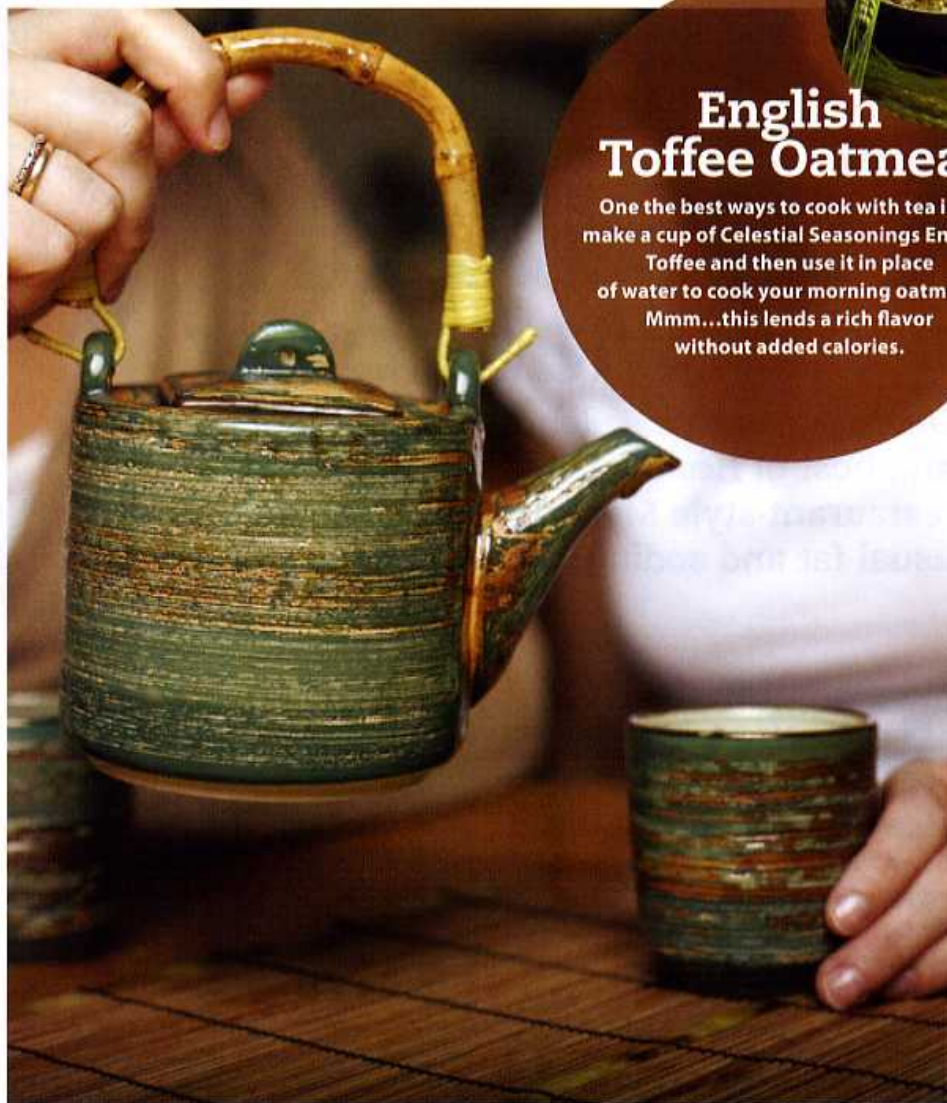
GREEN: The leaves skip the oxidation step and are slightly and rapidly heated to prevent oxidation, which results in a more subtle flavor and less caffeine (about 30 milligrams per cup).

OOLONG: This is a cross between green and black teas, whereby the leaves undergo partial oxidation.

WHITE: The rarest, most delicate, white tea is not oxidized and instead is withered and dried and undergoes the least processing, which helps keep their medical benefits.

RED BUSH OR ROOIBOS (ROY-BOSS): Grown in South Africa, this naturally caffeine-free herb contains high levels of antioxidants, vitamins and minerals.

HERBAL (INFUSIONS OR TISANES): These are not teas at all but beverages derived from various dried herbs, flowers, seeds and roots, all naturally caffeine free.



English Toffee Oatmeal

One of the best ways to cook with tea is to make a cup of Celestial Seasonings English Toffee and then use it in place of water to cook your morning oatmeal. Mmm...this lends a rich flavor without added calories.

Brewing a Cupful of Comfort

Many cultures believe that part of the magic of tea lies in its preparation. Brewing a proper cup of tea requires some degree of time, effort and contemplation. Sure, we can toss a teabag into a mug of water and zap it in the microwave, but like fat-free ice cream, it leaves us begging for the real thing. Instead, when we slow down, select a tea that is to our liking and take the time to prepare it, we are also reaping the benefits of a few moments to relax and recharge. The English, Moroccans, Russians and Japanese have all developed elaborate rituals for preparing this revered beverage; surely we can pick up a tip or two.

ONE Start with fresh cold water in a clean kettle. (Rinse out mineral deposits with vinegar and baking soda, if need be.)

TWO While the water is heating, swirl some of it into your teapot to warm it up.

THREE Use one teabag or one generous teaspoon of loose tea per cup, plus one for the pot. Tea purists advocate using only loose tea and placing it right

in the teapot so it has room to blossom while brewing. (Use a tea strainer for easier removal.)

FOUR As soon as the water comes to a boil, pour it over the tea. Avoid over-boiling the water, which causes the tea to taste "flat." For green tea, try to catch the water just before it boils.

FIVE Steep for three to five minutes, depending on taste.

SIX Remove the tea bags/loose tea from the pot or the brewed tea may become bitter.

SEVEN Sweeten with a touch of honey, stevia or any other CE-approved sweetener; or follow the English tradition of adding a splash of milk to soften any bitterness.

EIGHT Smell the aroma, sip the flavor and savor the comfort. ☺