

Top tips for tisanes

With Renee Creer

What is the difference between bagged and loose-leaf tea?

Tea bags were created for speed, efficiency, convenience and mass manufacture. The tea leaves used in mass market tea bags are very finely chopped, almost into a dust, and the quality and freshness of this tea can be dubious. However, many brands now do offer quality tea, which have larger or whole leaves in pyramid bags, which improves the quality of the product. Also, the material of the tea bags can contain chemicals.

Loose-leaf specialty teas are created with the intention of enhancing the characteristics of the leaf and its unique natural flavours; loose leaf tea tends towards the more artisan approach to manufacture, so tea leaves are generally of a better quality.

Should I use a pot or cup?

Steeping tea or tisanes loose in a pot gives the leaves or herbal ingredients more water flow and room to unfurl and release flavours, so it's worth taking the time to brew in a pot. And it creates more of a ritual around making a cup of tea and brings a bit of mindfulness to tea time, which I think increases the enjoyment.

How do you know how long you should steep a tea/tisane for?

Different teas need different water temperatures and steeping times and instructions should always be provided on the optimal measures, but ultimately, do what tastes good to you and try out different things. Herbal tisanes work best with boiling water and longer infusions – around five to 10 minutes – so the flavours in the ingredients can fully release and develop. And remember, if you want a stronger tea, use more leaves in the pot, don't steep the tea for longer.

Mount Zero Olive Leaf Tea with Lemongrass and Spearmint

(biodynamic Manzanilla olive leaves, lemongrass leaves, spearmint leaves)

Never had olive leaf tisane before? With a soft fragrance similar to high-quality olive oil, the biodynamic olive leaves in this blend give it a subtle earthy 'greenness', which is complimented by the tang of lemongrass and the freshness of spearmint. Lovers of peppermint tea will be all over this subtle blend. Mount Zero uses only the fresh shoots, which are then steamed, rubbed, rolled and dried. Olive leaves are high in antioxidants and are thought to deliver the same immunity-boosting and cold-and-flu-relieving benefits as olive leaf extract.

Tasting notes: earthy and fragrant

Find out more at mountzeroolives.com



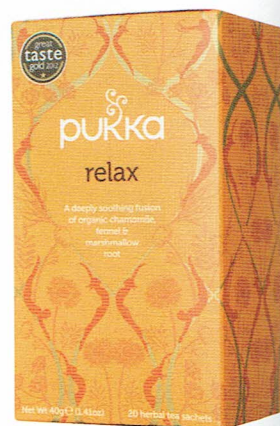
XO Tea Julep with Mint, Lemon Balm and Pineapple

(peppermint leaf, spearmint leaf, lemon balm leaf, candied pineapple, natural pineapple extract, marigold flowers)

If you stick your snoz into a box of this tisane and breathe deeply, you'll find yourself in a gorgeous garden on a hot summer's day – or close enough. It is fresh like cut grass and peppermints and sweet with tropical fruit and flowers. The makers at XO Tea call it stimulating, refreshing and flamboyant; we'll add delightfully summery and easy on the tummy. Lemon balm and mint can both ease digestive ailments, and the pineapple is just for fun.

Tasting notes: fruity and fresh

Find out more at xoteas.com.au



Pukka Relax

(fennel seed, liquorice root, chamomile flower, gotu kola leaf, cardamom seed, ginger root, marshmallow root, ashwagandha root)

Pukka uses Ayurveda medicine to create delicious organic blends with benefits. Their Relax tea is vata: made with calming herbs with soothing properties. Chamomile flower and gotu kola leaf help you to unwind; fennel seed, ginger and cardamom seed ease digestion; and marshmallow root and liquorice help to settle the mind. The spicy flavours of liquorice, cardamom and ginger are softened by the marshmallow and chamomile, leaving a slightly sweet note to the cup.

Tasting notes: Floral and fruity

Find out more at pukkaherbs.com.au

Yarra Valley Tea Co New You Detox

(certified organic dandelion leaf and root, nettle, birch, raspberry leaf, elderflower, calendula and cornflower)

A decidedly pretty tisane, the Yarra Valley Tea Co New You Detox (inside like a garden in spring and kind of looks like one too (inside 'tea temple', or pyramid teabag). Made with local ingredients and cleanse, it's said to be the perfect compliment to a healthy lifestyle.

Tasting notes: earthy and floral

Find out more at yarravalleytea.com.au



Kintra Foods Dandy Chai

(roasted dandelion root, roasted chicory root, cinnamon, star anise, cardamom, ginger, nutmeg and cloves)

The warm and calm feeling you get while sipping on a hot cup because it's delicious. At Kintra Foods, they believe that dandelion that benefits the liver, kidneys and even your blood. Combined with cinnamon and other aromatic spices, it's a wintery treat with a healthy twist.

Tasting notes: spicy, earthy and rich

Find out more at kintrafoods.com.au



Tea Tonic

(lemon myrtle)

Anyone who's been letting their senses in to inflammation is clear. All formulated with natural ingredients.

Tasting notes:

Find out more at kintrafoods.com.au