

Match Titles with the texts

1. Food Accompaniment
2. The Social Tea Tradition
3. Additional drinks
4. Russian symbol

5. Brewing Traditions
6. More than a drink
7. Types of Tea in Russia

A

Tea is an extremely significant part of Russian culture. Tea warms you up, wakes you up, and is nice after a big meal. Tea in Russia is not just a beverage—it's a social activity with a long-reaching tradition behind it.

B

Although it is common to stock several types of tea, for example, green, herbal, and black, most Russian people drink exclusively black tea and leave the other types for their guests. A lot of the tea sold in Russia comes from China and India and is sold loose-leaf. Common types of tea are an Oolong blend known as "Russian Caravan" and Keemun teas. Russian supermarkets also stock tea in tea bags, including American brands like Tetley and Red Rose; however, these better-known brands can be up to three times as expensive as Russian brands.

C

Tea is brewed from tea bags only if making tea for one person, or perhaps if one is in a rush. Otherwise, loose-leaf tea is made instead. This stems from traditional tea-drinking methods as well as from Russia's less-prosperous history, when all food products were extremely difficult to get, including tea, and one pot of tea had to serve many people.

The loose-leaf tea is brewed in a small teapot, with a high concentration of tea leaves to water. This is called the "заварка" (zavarka; tea concentrate), which is extremely strong. A bit of the zavarka is poured into large cups (more like American-style mugs), depending on preferred strength—anywhere from a thin layer to an inch—and water just off the boil is poured over top.

D

The tea is served hot, and is quite commonly consumed "black". However, it is customary for sugar and milk to be present on the table alongside the tea as well for those who wish to sweeten or dilute their tea.

E

Traditionally, the water for Russian tea was boiled in a "Samovar"; now, however, most Russian homes will have electric kettles. Real tea traditionalists drink their tea out of the saucer that goes under the teacup, rather than from the cup. First, the tea is poured into the saucer, and then it drips from the dish.

F

It is considered quite rude in Russia to serve tea "naked", that is, without any food to accompany it. Typical tea-time foods are sweets, such as cookies, biscuits, candy, and pies; these will usually be brought out for guests. However, crackers, bread, cheese, and sausage can be served instead, especially with close friends. Note that it is also considered slightly rude to drink your tea "naked"; that is, not to eat anything if such tea-time snacks have been served. Hosts usually stock "fancy" snacks that they bring out just for guests. Ideally, aim not to eat everything, but definitely to eat something, otherwise, your host may be offended.

G

Since Russian people are not traditionally accustomed to going out for lunch or dinner, it is much, much more common for a Russian person will invite you for a cup of tea rather than a meal out. The most common way for people to socialize in Russia is to visit each other at home for "a cup of tea". Like any social gathering, this can last anywhere from 30 minutes to several hours, but one way or another, tea will always be present on the table!

Tea is the Russians' solution to seemingly impossible problems, stress, sadness, and awkward or tense situations; likewise, tea is present at large family gatherings, big dinner gatherings with friends, dates, and reunions. There is almost no situation in which a cup of tea does not seem appropriate in Russia

More than a drink

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B Types of Tea in Russia

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Brewing and Drinking Traditions

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1. Additional drinks

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Food Accompaniment

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The Social Tea Tradition

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