Tea Ceremony Etiquette

A typical semi-formal British tea ritual might run as follows (the host performing all actions unless noted and The spout of the teapot and the tea kettle faces the hostess)

1. 1. The kettle is boiled and water poured into a teapot.
2. 2. Water is swirled around the pot to warm it and then poured out.
3. 3. Loose tealeaves—nowadays often [tea bags](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tea_bag) or the dust from a ripped-open tea bag—are then added to the pot while the kettle is re-boiled.
4. 4. Water is added to the pot and allowed to brew for several minutes while a [tea cozy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tea_cosy) is placed on the pot to keep the tea warm.
5. 5. Milk may be added to the teacup, the host asking the guest if milk is wanted, although milk may alternatively be added after the tea is poured.
6. 6. A tea strainer, like a miniature sieve, is placed over the top of the cup and the tea poured in.
7. 7. The straight black tea is then given to guests and they are allowed to add milk and sugar to their taste.
8. 8. The pot will normally hold enough tea so as not to be empty after filling the cups of all the guests. If this is the case, the tea cozy is replaced after everyone has been served.

There is also a proper manner in which to drink tea when using a cup and saucer. If one is seated at a table, the proper manner to drink tea is to raise the teacup only, placing it back into the saucer in between sips. When standing or sitting in a chair without a table, one holds the tea saucer with the left hand and the teacup in the right hand. When not in use, the teacup is placed back in the tea saucer and held in one's lap or at waist height. In either event, the teacup should never be held or waved in the air.

Drinking tea from the saucer (poured from the cup in order to cool it) was not uncommon at

Tea as a meal

Tea is not only the name of the beverage, but of a late afternoon light meal, irrespective of the beverage consumed. [Anna Russell, Duchess of Bedford](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anna_Russell%2C_Duchess_of_Bedford) is credited with the creation of the meal circa 1800. She thought of the idea to ward off hunger between lunch and dinner. The tradition continues to this day.

Industrial Revolution

Tea played a role in British [industrial revolution](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Industrial_revolution). Afternoon tea possibly became a way to increase the number of hours [laborers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Labourer) could work in [factories](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Factory); the stimulants in the tea, accompanied by [sugary](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sugar) snacks, would give workers energy to finish out the day's work. Further, tea helped alleviate some of the consequences of the [urbanization](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urbanization) that accompanied the industrial revolution: drinking tea required boiling one's water, thereby killing water-borne [diseases](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disease) like [dysentery](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dysentery), [cholera](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cholera), and [typhoid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Typhoid).