

A summer of ice & tea

As the weather heats up, the drinks get cooler and there's no better respite on hot days and balmy nights than iced tea.

Iced tea is a staple of the American south, synonymous with white picket fences and evenings on the porch watching the world go by. It's also a popular cold beverage in Asian countries, from vending machines dispensing cool oolong in Japan to bubble tea retailers shaking it with ice cubes and tapioca balls in Taiwan and kopitiam selling cold frothy teh tarik in Malaysia.

Australian tastebuds have only just discovered the delights of cold tea. While the bottled variety, such as Lipton Ice

Tea and Nestea, has been around for a while, new players such as the homegrown Springleaf and New Zealand brand Teza Teas are taking advantage of this growing segment.

If you're looking to cater to a more discerning tea drinker, instead of stocking your fridge with the bottled stuff, distinguish your café with some homemade iced tea. Not only does iced tea then become a selling point, you can also control the sweetness (good for diabetics and those watching their sugar intake) and

use tea as a versatile base for cocktails and mocktails.

HOME BREW

There are two main ways of making iced tea – hot brew or cold infusion – and each method has its pros and cons says Nathan Wakeford, President of the Australasian Specialty Tea Association (AASTA) and owner of Somage Fine Foods.

HOT BREW

The hot brew method allows you to make



For an added feature to a café menu, serve homemade ice tea. It's easy to control the sweetness and is a great base for cocktails and mocktails.

RECIPES

the tea on the spot according to demand and gives you more control over the strength of the brew, though you'll need fresh ice on hand to cool the tea. Brew the tea according to your wholesaler's instructions, but use 50 per cent more tea than usual. Pour the tea over ice to cool it down and serve sweetened with sugar syrup if desired.

COLD INFUSION

Cold infusion requires you to prepare the tea the night before, or in the morning for consumption in the afternoon. Place 12–15 grams of tealeaves per litre of cold, fresh water in the fridge. Leave to infuse overnight, ideally 12–16 hours, but at least eight hours. A closed receptacle such as a large jar, covered jug or a large teapot made of porcelain or glass is best, as the tea won't soak up the scent of anything else you might have in the fridge or that might have been in the container prior. Filter and serve with or without sugar syrup.

"Making iced tea is cost effective and a good way to move tea that might not be popular as a hot brew," says Nathan. "You can also add different flavours to make it more appealing to customers."

If you're after convenience but still want to distinguish your café from other outlets that merely stock the bottled stuff, you can use products such as Green Tea in 3 (by She-Tea, an AASTA member) which contains green tea and fruit extract, to make a cold brew in seconds, or Somage Fine Foods' Chamellia iced tea range, which comes pre-infused in 2-litre or 10-litre packs, ready to serve from the fridge.

HOW TO SELL COLD TEA

Iced tea will sell itself on hot days if you promote it, and the cachet of having made your own is certainly a draw card. Learn to experiment with different flavours: perhaps offer a different concoction every week to entice tea drinkers back during the summer or suggest food matches to enhance the experience.

Making your own iced tea will also allow you to try mixtures:

- With or without caffeine, using tea or fruit tisanes or herbal blends instead of tea.
- With or without sugar, using just tea or adding syrup.
- With or without flavours, using plain tea, flavoured tea or tea with fruit or cordial.

Add a bit of sparkle with carbonated water if you have the equipment on hand or, for licensed cafés, iced tea with and without alcohol is also an option. It's a good idea to have both on hand so teetotallers can enjoy it along with their

SPARKLING LEMONGRASS GRANITA

Lemongrass and ginger infusion
Champagne (or any white sparkling wine)
Sugar syrup
Crushed ice

1. Make a strong brew of the infusion.
2. Add wine and syrup to taste.
3. Serve over crushed ice.

This tea contains no caffeine.

—Vanessa Carslake, She-Tea (an AASTA member)

ICED CHAI

Chai
Vanilla syrup
Ice cubes

1. Brew chai using recommended method.
2. Per serve, add 1 tablespoon of vanilla syrup
3. Place into the fridge and leave overnight or until cool. Serve over ice cubes.

ICED CHAI (WITH MILK)

This quick method serves two
3 teaspoons chai
375 millilitres water
250 millilitres cold milk
2 tablespoons vanilla syrup
Ice cubes

1. Brew chai in water for five minutes.
2. Add chilled milk and vanilla syrup. Serve over ice cubes.

You can also use caffeine-free chai for this brew.

—Uppma Viridi, Chai Walli (an AASTA member)

drinking friends.

Here's to summer!

This article is brought to you by the Australasian Specialty Tea Association (www.aasta.asn.au), which is devoted to providing BeanScene readers with advice



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COOL OOLONG

(Makes 1 litre)

3 tablespoons oolong tea (milk oolong preferred)
250 millilitres hot water
1 litre of freshly drawn cold water

1. Place tea in a receptacle, ideally glass or porcelain.
2. With hot water, wash the tea for 30 seconds. The hot water will help the tea to 'awaken'.
3. Drain the hot water and add cold water.
4. Leave overnight (six to eight hours), strain and serve.

This tea is sugar free and can be re-infused two to three times. For each additional infusion, allow a few extra hours for more flavour to emerge.

—Adeline Teoh (an AASTA member)

PU'ER MULE

Serves 1

2–3 centimetres fresh ginger
25 millilitres fresh lime juice
25 millilitres pu'er syrup*
50 millilitres gin

Ice

150 millilitres soda water

*Pu'er syrup:

Pu'er tea (to taste)

1 cup white sugar

1 cup hot water

Make a strong tea. While still hot, strain the tea and add sugar to liquid. Stir until sugar has dissolved, then cool and refrigerate for up to one week.

1. Peel the ginger and roughly chop. Add to a mixing glass and muddle to release juice.
2. Add lime juice and pu'er syrup to the mixing glass. Taste and adjust balance if necessary.
3. Add gin, and then fill the mixing glass with ice. Shake hard.
4. Double strain (to remove ginger fibres) into a highball glass filled with ice.
5. Top with soda and stir gently to mix. Garnish with a lime wheel.

—Mark Thirlwall (an AASTA member) via The Hutong