

Tea is the world's second most popular drink (after water!). In the UK, you can even celebrate drinking it on 21 April.

Before reading

Do the preparation task first. Then read the article and do the exercises.

Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–h) with the vocabulary (1–8).

Vocabulary

1. a cuppa
2. to brew
3. to provoke
4. porcelain
5. to withstand
6. an affair
7. to enrich
8. sustainably

Definition

- a. to be strong enough not to break
- b. a cup of tea (informal British English)
- c. to cause
- d. to improve the quality of
- e. to develop flavour in hot water
- f. in a way that can continue for a long time
- g. an event
- h. a hard, white substance used for making cups, plates, etc.

National Tea Day

If you've ever spent time in the UK, you'll surely have had a nice 'cuppa'. There's tea for breakfast, tea during break time, tea when visiting a friend's house, tea to wake up, tea to relax ... you get the idea. Tea even gets its very own special day in the UK, 21 April.

Is the UK the 'capital' of tea?

In short, no. While drinking tea is certainly a centuries-old tradition in the UK, many countries have their own strong cultural practices involving tea. The nation which drinks most tea is Turkey, where a 2013 survey showed that people drank an average of ten cups a day! This was followed by Ireland, with the UK coming in third place. Other countries with an obsession with tea include Iran, Russia and Morocco. It is also a popular drink in China and India, where most of the world's tea is grown.

What do the British consider to be tea?

Many forms of tea exist around the world. Green tea is popular in China and Japan. In India, tea is often prepared with spices and boiled in both water and milk, and Tibetans commonly drink tea with butter and salt. In the UK, tea is typically a variety of black tea and can be prepared with loose tea or teabags. It is made with boiling water, allowed to brew for about

five minutes and then mixed with a little milk (and possibly some sugar). And thus, the perfect British cuppa is ready!

Milk: before or after the tea?

Despite the fact that tea has been popular in the UK for hundreds of years, the question of when to add the milk is one which still provokes many an argument! Most people first pour the tea into the cup, then add the milk, but others disagree. It is said that this was a way for the rich to show off their wealth. They often drank tea in porcelain cups, and it was only the better-quality porcelain that could withstand the temperature of very hot tea. This meant that people who had lower-quality cups needed to first pour the milk so that the cup wouldn't break.

What is a tea party?

Many cultures have traditions of people meeting to sit together and drink tea. For example, Japanese tea ceremonies can be formal, elegant affairs which last for hours. In the UK, such gatherings range from formal to very informal. The most famous British 'tea' stereotype is probably afternoon tea, where people dress formally and meet in hotels or cafés to enjoy tea and cakes, all served on beautiful fine porcelain. Nowadays, going out for a formal afternoon tea is rare, and people will more often simply have a nice cup of tea and some biscuits with friends or family, catching up round the kitchen table.

What happens on National Tea Day?

On 21 April, tea parties are held in cafés, pubs, hotels and tea rooms across the UK. Many of these events aim to encourage people to try different varieties of tea and to appreciate how drinking it with others can enrich their lives. Some of these events also promote sustainably produced tea and better prices and working conditions for farmers, while others raise funds for different charities from the sales. However people observe this special day, it's about appreciating the opportunity that sharing a cup of tea gives to people to connect with one another.

Want to know more about tea celebrations this April? Search for #NationalTeaDay on social media. And remember, tea-drinking isn't just for April – it's always the right time for a delicious cuppa.

Tasks

Task 1

Are the sentences true or false?

	Answer	
	True	False
1. In the UK, tea is mainly drunk early in the morning.	True	False
2. People in Morocco generally drink less tea than people in the UK.	True	False
3. A typical British cuppa has sugar and might have milk.	True	False
4. In the UK, everyone pours the milk first and then the tea.	True	False
5. Meeting to drink tea is a tradition in many cultures.	True	False
6. Formal afternoon teas are still very common in the UK.	True	False

Task 2

Write the words and phrases in order to make sentences.

1. you'll surely ever spent time If you've have had in the UK, a nice 'cuppa'.

2. strong cultural practices While it many countries is an old tradition
have their own in the UK, involving tea.

3. of the world's tea a popular drink also is grown. It is in China and India,
where most

4. to add milk many an argument! of when which still The question provokes
is one

5. to show this was It is said that their wealth. a way the rich off for

6. to sit together cultures of people Many and drink tea. have traditions
meeting

Discussion

Is tea popular where you live? What is the best way to enjoy a cup of tea?

Answers

Preparation task

1. b
2. e
3. c
4. h
5. a
6. g
7. d
8. f

Task 1

1. False
2. True
3. False
4. False
5. True
6. False

Task 2

1. If you've ever spent time in the UK, you'll surely have had a nice 'cuppa'.
2. While it is an old tradition in the UK, many countries have their own strong cultural practices involving tea.
3. It is also a popular drink in China and India, where most of the world's tea is grown.
4. The question of when to add milk is one which still provokes many an argument!
5. It is said that this was a way for the rich to show off their wealth.
6. Many cultures have traditions of people meeting to sit together and drink tea.