



Summer is coming to a close and I cannot believe how quickly it seemed to go by this year! Although I have to admit that I always look forward to this time of year - it is still warm during the day, the nights get cooler, and the spiced, harvest-inspired teas start to arrive. For me, there has always been a sort of ritual and ceremony at this time of year and, inspired by this, the focus in this month's **Spotlight on...** section is on the Asian tea ceremonies. In the **Tea & Health** section we explore tea's potential effect on reducing cognitive dysfunction. Be sure to take advantage of this month's specials in **Aug-Sept's Special Offers**. We continue to strive to bring you the latest information about tea and tisanes each month and we look forward to your comments and suggestions. Thank you for reading!

## Spotlight on... Asian Tea Ceremonies

If you have ever visited a tea room, then you are most likely familiar with afternoon tea and the ritual and ceremony that accompanies this British tradition. While tea is a component of afternoon tea, it is not the main focal point. Greater emphasis is placed on the food and its presentation and the decorative elements that create an ambiance of luxury. This focus is in stark contrast to the much older Asian traditions of tea ceremony, which place a greater focus on the tea, its proper preparation, and the aesthetics of the ceremony.

Regardless of whether tea is part of an informal tradition or a more formal ritual or ceremony, it is clear that tea serves a major role in the daily lives of many people in Asia. There are three primary formal tea ceremonies: 1) China's Gong-Fu Cha; 2) Japan's Cha-no-yu, also known as the Japanese Tea Ceremony; and 3) the Korean Tea Ceremony practiced in South Korea.

There are several common themes within each of these tea ceremonies. Tea is the "star" of the ceremony; reverence and quiet contemplation focuses on the simple, yet not so easy, task of preparing perfect tea. There is a solemnity and focus on being in the present with no outside distractions for the duration of the ceremony, which can last for several hours. Each tea ceremony is an expression of beauty, simplicity, and harmony as portrayed through the intricate, ritualized steps that take years, if not decades, to master.

Even though there are similarities among each of the Asian tea ceremonies, each ceremony also exhibits its own uniqueness that is deeply entrenched in the cultural aspects of its originating country. The steps of the ceremony, the tea ware and other equipment used, and the tea prepared and served all differ. In Gong-Fu Cha, a small Yixing clay teapot is

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## Upcoming Events



**Sunday 9/2**

**Ronkonkoma Street Fair**  
Hawkins Ave, Ronkonkoma  
11:00am-6:00pm

**Sunday 9/9**

**Nesconset Day**  
Smithtown Blvd., Nesconset  
10:00am-5:00pm

**Sunday 9/23**

**West Islip Country Fair**  
Montauk Hwy. & Higbie Ln.,  
West Islip  
11:00am-5:00pm

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usually used and the same leaves of a premium-grade oolong is infused and served for many rounds - sometimes up to ten times. In Cha-no-yu, the green tea, matcha, is the tea of choice, along with all of the bowls and utensils that are necessary to prepare and serve it. In the Korean Tea Ceremony, a Korean ceramic teapot and bowls are used to serve Korean green tea.

A nice abbreviated Cha-no-yu ceremony can be experienced in an authentic Japanese teahouse locally on Long Island at The John P. Humes Japanese Stroll Garden in Mill Neck. For schedule, fees, and directions, please visit the garden's website [www.humesjapanesestrollgarden.org](http://www.humesjapanesestrollgarden.org). The Coffee & Tea Festival usually includes an abbreviated version of the Korean Tea Ceremony and/or Gong-Fu Cha. Visit their website [www.coffeeandteafestival.com](http://www.coffeeandteafestival.com) for locations, dates and festival information.

### Tea & Health: Tea & Cognitive Function

A recent study conducted by Japanese researchers analyzed a group of elderly people with normal or minimal cognitive dysfunction. Some of the group members consumed a powdered green tea, while the other group members served as the placebo, consuming no tea. By the end of the study period, the researchers observed that there was a significantly lower incidence of cognitive decline in the group that had been consuming the powdered green tea. The researchers believe that the amino acid, theanine, may be responsible for these results. Theanine has a chemical structure that is similar to glutamate, a neurotransmitter that has been shown to positively affect memory. Theanine also is believed to pass through the blood-brain barrier where it then provides a potential brain-protective effect.



*Yours in tea,*

*Kristine Henderson  
The Pleasures of Tea*

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### Contact Info

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## Aug-Sept's Special

### Offers:

- **Sept12** - save 10% on all single origin Chinese, Japanese, and South Korean green and oolong teas.
- **Ship2012** - free shipping on any order subtotal of \$80 or more.

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