

Herbal Tea Power

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Herbal teas have long been revered for soothing flavors and therapeutic properties. Most of us recognize popular herbs used in both hot and cold infusions like chamomile and mint. They each offer unique benefits and pleasing tastes. These herbs, along with others like lemongrass, lavender, and hibiscus, can be incorporated into daily routines for refreshment and sometimes just for relaxation.

Chamomile, a daisy-like flower, is known for calming effects. Often consumed just before bedtime, chamomile tea helps ease anxiety and promote sleep. As a hot brew it releases a subtle floral aroma that is soothing. Chilled chamomile tea with a splash of honey and lemon is another way to enjoy the herb in hotter months.

Mint, especially peppermint and spearmint, is invigorating and can help with digestion. A hot cup of mint tea helps people feel less bloated after eating large meals. Iced mint tea with a slice of lime, offers a cooling option during warm weather. The natural menthol found in mint provides a crisp flavor; that can be pleasing. Mints can be invasive when grown in the garden; I use slates to contain them to keep them in “their spot”.

Other herbs can be blended with chamomile and mint for enhanced effects. **Lemongrass or even a leaf of lemon balm** adds bright flavor and supports digestion. **Lavender** contributes a floral taste and helps reduce stress. Lavender actually works very well with chamomile. **Hibiscus** can be a bit tart but is rich in antioxidants. It adds gorgeous deep color to drinks and is quite delicious cold. Rose Hips, I’ve learned, can be added for a final touch.

Brewing herbal tea is fairly simple: steep one to two teaspoons of dried herbs (or a handful of fresh) in hot water for 5–10 minutes. For iced tea, let the brew cool and refrigerate, or steep double-strength and pour over ice. Add sweeteners, fruits, or even a splash of seltzer water for a fun change of pace.

Whether winding down with a warm cup or cooling off with glass full of iced tea, herbal teas made with chamomile, mint, and other botanicals are a flavorful, healthful way to hydrate and heal.

I attended a WREN sponsored Tea gathering at *The Place above the Notch Cafe* in Bethlehem in the springtime. We sampled Chamomile tea and had a wonderful Chocolate Mint blend that smelled like an open box of Girl Scout Thin Mint Cookies! Yum! The owner is very creative with her herbal mixes and used tea presses while describing the various blends she would be serving. *The Place above the Notch* had amazing pastry offerings as well as rentable space for local people to work. Their calendar is full of community events. It is a happening place with great tea and coffee options.

With the hotter days of summer upon us, I can be found with a soothing glass of iced Blueberry Hibiscus tea; I calmly anticipate returning to gardening before the sun becomes too intense.

Littleton Garden Club welcomes new members. We stay active with monthly meetings, educational opportunities and tend flower gardens around Littleton. For more information please visit our website at: <https://www.littletonnhgardenclub.org/>



Teas served at the The Place above the notch in Bethlehem.