***The Perfect Pot of Tea (tay)  
New! Teatime Cookbook*** [***Click Here***](http://www.cbladey.com/booksell.html)

***The Irish are well known for their fondness for tea. The English, infact ,long ago switched to coffee. The Irish cupan tae (cup of tea) is strong and robust-a good buffer against geography and the weather. Tae keeps the farmers working and gives the factory, office and construction workers a break. The ritual is found at all levels of society in both North and South.***

***The Water:* Must contain as much air as possible. Cold water right from the tap is best-boil and use immediately -do not over boil!!!**

*The Pot* The pot must keep the tea warm for long enough for the tea to steep-it must be steeped for 5 whole minutes-Earthenware pots are the best as the clay contains air pockets which insulate. The pot can be kept warm using a tea cozy, towel ,newspaper or in our house the Cat!!

*The Milk:* Lots of it-and cream or full milk. Irish tea is specifically blended to be mixed with a lot of rich milk or cream-1/4 -1/3 of the total volume. Even if you do not take milk -try it with Irish Tea. Please note: the milk goes into the cup first-important!!!!

*The Sugar:* Must match the occasion-colored, cubed, coarse, smooth or in packets.!

*Mother* : Someone is needed to pour out the tea (male, female, old or young-anyone can be ”Mother”. The host or hostess is too busy preparing snacks and getting things organized or welcoming guests and is not to be disturbed. We cannot have self-service or chaos--so someone must step in to officially become the “Mother” and pour out and serve the tea. It is advised to volunteer (that is if you want to get it before it is cold!)The host or hostess will say: “Who would like to be mother?” but you should first say-”shall I be mother?”

*The Tea:* Irish Blend tea is composed of High Grown Ceylon tea grown over 4,000 feet above sea level mixed with a hearty Assam tea-a bold Indian tea with malted hints and deep color. Small leaf teas are used for a strong full liquoring effect .Bulk tea is best. *Instructions:* Put tea into the pot loose or use an infuser-take care not to pack the infuser to tightly- a tea strainer is an essential piece of equipment. ***Never throw tea leaves out-they have been through a lot-use them as a room freshener or for plant food for roses and other acid lovers.***!

*Making the Tea:* Warm the pot. Use one heaping teaspoon of tea per cup of water and then add one extra “for the Pot”-Always-BRING THE POT TO THE HOT WATER. Steep the tea for 5 minutes keep warm and serve.

***The Ritual***: Each tea service is a bit different. It is important to grasp the essential purpose of the tea being celebrated and plan accordingly it a workman’s tea, teddy bear tea, or get acquainted tea. Sweets and treats should be served accordingly and always consist of a variety of textures colors and flavors which complement the tea and the occasion itself. Baked goods should not be overly moist. The tea should also be in harmony with the hour of the day-Afternoon Tea is served 3-5 P.M. with a light sweet fare. Elevenses- 11:00 A.M-tea and scones informal-a break. High Tea is almost an Evening meal-6:00P.M. The tea should also reflect the season and celebrate seasonal produce.

**Sources Schapiro, David The Book of Coffee and Teas. Martins Press,N.Y.,1975  
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