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FOREWORD REVIEW ♥♥♥♥♥ COOKING

The Herb Tea Book

Susan Clotfelter
Interweave Press (September 1998)
Unknown $12.95 (130pp)
978-1-883010-60-7

According to Chinese legend, a tea leaf drifted into the cup of Emperor Shen Nong five thousand years ago and the international beverage was born. Several millennium later, those same Chinese began to add herbal ingredients to the Camellia sinensis: peppermint, ginger, even salt. The Herb Tea Book describes and delights in all the varieties of what we call “tea”—the herbal and the caffeinated, the black and the green, the smoky and the milky.

Clotfelter’s writing is stylish and fluid. She begins with a catalogue of common herbal ingredients and follows with a history of the cultivation and preparation of the tea leaf. There is also a no-nonsense chapter on tea-tools, as well as a pep-talk for would-be male imbibers by one of their own tribe.

The very best is saved for last: 50 recipes by the author’s friends and associates for all sorts of delicious, intoxicating, soothing and refreshing blends. Try Splendid Woman’s Tea made with verbena and rose petals, or Dinner Party Chai with black tea, milk and honey, coriander, peppercorn, and a host of other ingenious ingredients for the guests around your table. Almost all of the recipes come in two versions, for the solitary and the party drinkers (up to 64 cups). This is a great gift book, particularly if accompanied by some exotic tea leaves and a few fragrant herbs and spices.

H. SHAW CAUCHY (December 16, 1998)

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