

# COOKING WITH TEA: A HEALTHY OPTION

BY DANIELLE BEAUDETTE



*Danielle Beaudette*

The fall awakens our senses to the vibrant colors transforming the trees and the sounds of fallen leaves beneath our feet. This is the time to enjoy the outdoors and all that autumn in New England has to offer. Be sure to hydrate yourself with a travel mug filled with steaming tea as you set out on your foliage travels.

The changing season brings new harvests in a bounty of fruits and vegetables. This is the time to take advantage of all the fresh produce appearing on farm stand shelves. Fresh picked apples are in abundance in all varieties, ready for your first apple pie of the season. A somewhat new approach to making your fresh produce even healthier is to add tea as your 'secret' ingredient, and why not? Tea estates all over the world are readying for their last harvest, before allowing the bushes to lay dormant for the winter.

When planning your fall schedules, be sure to include time for an autumn afternoon tea gathering with friends or family. It's easy to incorporate the comfort foods of fall into your menu. For starters, steep up a Hot Cinnamon tea and serve it with zucchini-carrot muffins and Chai tea scones, alongside a saucer of freshly canned apple preserves. Pear, apple and cheddar cheese skewers are a light alternative complemented with a White Velvet tea. Your second course can be a tea-brined turkey sandwich with an earl grey dried cherry mustard. Another favorite is a prosciutto, Dijon and

melted brie sandwich with balsamic and tea-caramelized onions served with a strong Nilgiri or Assam black tea. In the last course, we recommend Matcha green tea chocolate truffles served with a rich English Caramel tea. Other dessert choices we'd recommend are a Formosa oolong tea crème brulee, or an apple Ceylon tea cake served with Ceylon Breakfast tea. Many of these recipes can be found in the recently published cookbook, "Culinary Tea: More Than 100 Recipes Steeped in Tradition From Around the World" by Cynthia Gold and Lise Stern.



**Tea Vinaigrette**

- 1 cup white wine vinegar, white balsamic
- 1 heaping Tbsp Darjeeling tea leaves
- 3 T honey or 2 T light brown sugar
- 1 T chopped shallots
- 1 clove chopped garlic (optional)
- 1 T chopped fresh herbs. A blend of thyme, sage and tarragon is nice.
- 1 cup vegetable oil or Organic Tea Seed oil
- salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Bring vinegar to a boil, add tea leaves

and remove from heat. Let sit until cool and strain well. Whisk together infused vinegar, honey, shallots, herbs, salt and pepper. Drizzle in oil while continuing to whisk. This may be made in a blender or food processor instead of hand whisking. Chill for several hours before using if time. This vinaigrette is nice with a salad featuring fruit, such as a variety of pears (three different colors is very eye-appealing) and feta cheese.

This delicious tea-infused vinaigrette can be served over fresh greens. When used with the Tea Seed Oil, it is a tasty dipping sauce on a fall harvest vegetable platter. This recipe was provided with permission by Cynthia Gold, Tea Sommelier and world renowned Culinary Tea Expert from the Boston Park Plaza Hotel. She will be sampling her recipes and providing cooking with tea demonstrations on Nov. 6, 2010 at The Cozy Tea Cart!

*Danielle Beaudette is the owner of The Cozy Tea Cart in Brookline, NH. One of the first 15 in the world to be certified as a Tea Specialist, she continues to broaden her knowledge on tea through on-going studies with the Specialty Tea Institute, the World Tea Expo, and her travels to tea countries around the world. For more information call 603-249-9111 or visit her website at [www.TheCozyTeaCart.com](http://www.TheCozyTeaCart.com).*

