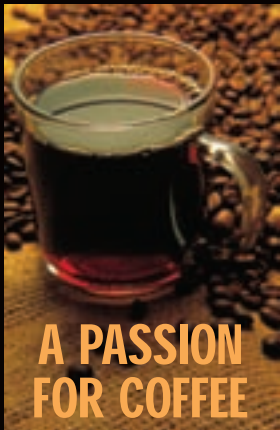


Chai Tea-The Un-Coffee

By Katie Beck Photography by Russell Bamer



A PASSION
FOR COFFEE

The familiar flavors of fall are present in every savored sip of chai, a black spiced milk tea from India. This beverage has been an important part of many cultures for centuries, and is a part of daily life in Indian households. The spices used to enrich the flavor of the tea vary among different regions, but the most commonly used are cardamom, cloves, ginger, cinnamon and pepper. Black tea has a rich flavor that is improved upon with the addition of soothing warm milk and spices reminiscent of pumpkin pie, which creates the perfect autumn beverage, chai.

The popularity of chai in the United States has increased rapidly over the past three years, and for good reason. This drink has the uplifting benefits of coffee, but sipping on chai creates a feeling of calm energy rather than a jittery buzz. Chai is a perfect alternative to coffee in the morning, a relaxing way to wind down in the afternoon and an ideal after-dinner drink.

There are many variations of the chai recipe, some with different ingredients and some that have been tweaked to accommodate our busy schedules, but investing some time in making a traditional cup of tea is well worth the effort. To create one cup of this delectable drink, begin with fresh ingredients that can be found in most grocery stores or specialty food shops (like International Delights or Sun Harvest). Choose a high quality black tea like Darjeeling, Mamri, Brook Bond Red Label or Taj Mahal. Then pick fresh spices: cloves, cinnamon stick, fresh ginger (not powdered), whole black peppercorns and cardamom pods. For the milk, use Half and Half to ensure the rich taste of real chai.

Take a clean pot and pour $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of water, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of Half and Half and 1 teaspoon black tea inside. Then take a clean piece of parchment paper and place 1 pod of cardamom, 1 black peppercorn and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon grated cinnamon. Crush the spices up and place in the pot with the milk/tea mixture. Add a thin slice of fresh ginger, 1 clove and simmer on stove-top for about 15 minutes, stirring continuously. Add sugar to taste, strain, and then pour into a mug and enjoy a rejuvenating cup of chai.

HOMEMADE CHAI TEA (yields 1 cup)

- 1 heaping teaspoon of black tea
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of water
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of milk (half and half)
- 1 pod cardamom
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon grated cinnamon
- 1 whole black peppercorn
- 1 thin slice of fresh ginger root
- 1 clove






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