

Dear Hostess,

Thank you for inviting us to help with your Tea. I'm so glad to share in this love of hosting parties with you. If any event was well suited to host by yourself, it's an afternoon tea.

With a few easy steps you can treat your guests to a little Southern Hospitality at home, The Party Bee way. I hope this booklet of party tips and kitchen tricks helps you enjoy the most important part of any party: spending time with your guests. Because, after all, to host is to love.

With Cheers and Thanks,

The Party Bee

### Setting the Tea Table:

Whether it's a buffet or a seated tea, a tea table will have platters or a tiered serving stand for the sandwiches, scones and sweets. Remember bowls and spoons for the cream and jam, creamer and sugar, as well as a lemon plate. It is traditional for the three courses to be offered with sandwiches first, or on the bottom level of the tiered server; scones second or in the middle of the server; with the sweets on the top level. No matter how it is served we hope it will be an enjoyable day for you and your guests!

### Tea Sandwiches: The First Course

Savory sandwiches are often called finger sandwiches, because they are shaped no larger than a lady's finger and also may be eaten out of hand without a fork.

As they contain cream cheese, keep refrigerated until ready to plate and serve.

Once they have been stacked in a tick, tac, toe or circular pattern, keep finger sandwiches from drying out by laying a damp towel on top. Run a paper towel under water then wring out and lay over the sandwiches so it covers all sides. Or use your tea towel and briefly run it under water to make it damp. Remove just before serving.

To keep open faced sandwiches fresh, keep covered in their plastic packaging in the refrigerator until ready to serve. Lettuce leaves are great garnishes and naturally contain moisture which helps keep the sandwiches fresh. As a southern lady, I especially love hydrangea leaves for garnish. You know what they say: hydrangeas are like a southern lady, they enjoy morning sun and afternoon shade.

## Scones, cream and preserves: The Second Course

The basis of any traditional tea is the scones. In fact, the most simple tea with just one course of scones is called a Cream Tea. The British are very particular about their scones and cream. It is interesting that in Cornwall the jam is spread on the scone before the cream, and in Devonshire, the cream is spread on first. Either way, it is delicious, especially with the variety of flavors of scones we offer. One of the scone flavors is white chocolate almond so it is not suitable for those with nut allergies.

The scones are wonderful at room temperature. But for an extra special treat, warm them just before serving: Lay out scones on a cookie sheet and run in a 300 degree oven for only 3-5 minutes to gently warm. Then serve immediately.

The jar of double cream is best after being stirred up. Simply empty the jar out into a kitchen bowl, stir with a fork until blended and smooth, then transfer into your serving dish or back into the jar for serving.

Serve cream and preserves with a spreader, master butter or spoon so guests may serve a dollop onto their tea plate. If you have them, a spreader for each guest is a nice touch.

## Sweets: The Final Course

Petit Four is French for “small oven”. These little marzipan cakes are an entertaining staple at baby showers and bridal parties throughout the deep south. Do note they contain almond paste and are not suitable for those with nut allergies.

Tea Cookies are traditionally served as a last course or on the top tier of your three-tiered stand.

French Pastries have been kept cold until we delivered them to you. As long as you are serving them within the afternoon, they will be fine to keep out if you don't have room in your refrigerator. If any are left over, place them in a small airtight container and store in the refrigerator for up to 5 days.

## Tea:

The Party Bee exclusively serves Harney and Sons tea. Our favorite flavor is Paris which we use to make our signature Mason Jar Tea Concentrate. It can be kept in the refrigerator for up to 5 days. It appears opaque when cold, but when added to hot water it turns clear again. The small mason jar contains 2 cups of concentrate which is enough to make two pots of tea.

To prepare: warm your tea pot with some hot or boiling water, wait a minute for the pot to get warm, then dump out the water to keep the cold pot from affecting the temperature of the tea.

To make a pot of tea: combine 4 parts boiling water with 1 part tea concentrate. Usually, a tea pot is 5 cups (40 oz.) which means you add 1 cup (which is 8 oz. or half of the mason jar) of concentrate with 4 cups (32 oz.) of boiling water.

After your guests have enjoyed their first serving of tea you can make another pot with the remaining tea concentrate or you can make it cup by cup using the same 4:1 ratio.

To serve: offer your guests milk, sugar cubes and honey alongside your tea service. The lemon wheels look especially nice laid out on a small plate with a silver serving fork. But remember that lemon curdles milk; so, use one or the other with your tea.

To keep warm: use a tea cozy or wrap a tea towel around your pot to keep your tea as warm as possible during your party.

For individualized flavors you may elect to use single servings of tea. Whether it's a sachet (loose tea leaves in a silk pouch) or a tea bag (cut tea leaves folded in a paper envelope) ensure your water is boiling and heed the steep time on the package. Tins of Harney and Sons Tea may be selected rather than our Mason Jar tea. Flavor choices are based on availability.

*Now its high time you enjoy your tea and greet your guests!*