



online edition



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## Afternoon Tea in the Carolinas

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In today's hectic world we drink coffee for a burst of energy and productivity while tea has connotations of serenity, relaxation and slow or no movement at all.

Numerous AAA-rated Four Diamond and Five Diamond hotels, resorts, boutique hotels, restaurants, and bed & breakfast inns in North and South Carolina honor this centuries-old tradition.

They maintain customs of their own in the areas of etiquette, table settings, food and beverage offerings and soft music. Some even customize the name: high tea, proper afternoon tea, formal tea, Americanized tea, etc. In South Carolina teas are offered by Wild Dunes Resort, The Sanctuary at Kiawah Island and Charleston Place. North Carolina afternoon teas can be found at the O.Henry Hotel, the Inn on Biltmore Estate, The Carolina Inn and the Washington Duke Hotel and Golf Club.

The Farrington House Inn, North Carolinas only AAA Five Diamond inn and restaurant, offers a proper afternoon tea as a special amenity to guests and for those that prefer privacy, afternoon tea is available in your room.

### Heartier than Most Meals

Some afternoon teas offerings rival notable wine lists. Popular flavors include Darjeeling, Earl Grey, English Breakfast and Fine Assam.

Lesser-known offerings may include: Yorkshire Gold, China Rose Petal, Passionfruit, Imperial Gunpowder (leaves are in a pellet-like shape), decaffeinated (Chamomile Flowers Tisane or Peppermint Tisane), and special blends.

Some guests mingle tea with a taste of the bubbly, in which case they can have the Tea Royale that includes French Champagne, Mimosa, or Kir Royale (black currant-flavored liqueur and champagne).

Afternoon tea generally includes a variation of sandwiches, sweets, desserts, fruit, and breads.

True tea includes scones with clotted cream (most often crem fraiche since the clotted cream often found at tea in England and Europe is unpasteurized), lemon curd, and preserves.

The three-edged scones are light and heavenly, and served in a variety of flavors (orange with blackberry currants, lemon, etc.), depending on the hotel or restaurant.

### Tea Etiquette

A special note to those interested in the etiquette of eating this triangular treat: break off a bite-size piece, place it on your plate and then apply the jam or cream; do not use a fork and no dipping (single or double).

Sandwiches also play a key role in creating the perfect afternoon tea experience. Thinly-sliced cucumbers, sometimes with tomato, sometimes cream cheese or butter, are placed between the slices of crustless bread. The Farrington House tea includes scones, eclairs, flapjack, barabrith (welsh fruit bread soaked in tea), brownie, lavender or rosemary shortbread, oatmeal cookie and a selection of sandwiches, smoked salmon, cucumber and dill cream cheese, roast beef, cheese and tomato and egg mayonnaise, hardly a light snack to accompany tea. Coffee is always available for those who want extra caffeine rather than the milder taste of tea.

For more about what is offered at tea time in the Carolinas, go to AAA.com and click on GO Magazine, current articles.