

July 7, 2022

Dear Cup of Tea,

You are best served hot with a small splash of dairy; enough to temper the tannins, not so much that it is really a warm cup of hot thinned milk with a hit of tea. My mom likes it this way. I like it this way. My daughter likes it this way.

You are the go-to beverage first thing in the morning. I like Bewely's. Mom likes a store bought decaf. My daughter loves exotic Asian teas, preferably at a café loose leaf with a tea pot.

I also love you iced unsweetened with a lemon. The others don't share that, preferring something sweetened sometimes with fruit juice.

My daughter and I also enjoy a Chai latte. "You cannot say chai tea" my daughter and I would say because chai means tea and it is silly to say tea tea. This was a sweet luxury I introduced to my daughter to. When I had money, I took her to a variety of cafés that make their own or have one of those tetra-pac pre-made mixes. Like in India, every place had their own "secret" recipe. We found one we liked at the grocery store. We both enjoyed it and she eventually explored other places on her own. I always wanted to try making it at home.

I enjoy coffee as well, but when I am sick or lonely or cold or anxious, it is a hot black tea with a splash of dairy that I turn to for comfort. We do not have a strong family bond anymore. To be fair, I don't remember us having one ever. The only generational thing that we have that my mom, my daughter and I share is this hot cup of tea.

I love how we share this and every generation we add to this journey by making it uniquely ours. I have learned so much about my daughter through the tea she learned about and enjoys. I loved a precious routine we where she brought me hot black tea in the morning and I me reciprocating by bringing her something herbal before bed. This eventually changed to a white tea my mom received as a gift and then a store bought one Claire found.

We stopped this reciprocity of morning tea and bedtime tea. I think we forgot that it was a kind gesture and not the burden it became when one of us would ask. The magic was lost and we changed to a tense demand for coffee in the morning as our last connection before she moved. Coffee does not have the same comfort as tea. It does not make the same bonds.

My mom and I share this now with electric tea pots and endless cups. The reciprocity is often in the shared "I turned the kettle on, do you want more tea?"

Thank you again tea for being a multigenerational source of comfort and a safe way of easing into the day.

With Kind Regards,

~S