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The Japanese Tea Ceremony is an ancient cultural tradition that is highly and elaborately ritualized. Kakuzo Okakura, a Japanese scholar and author of The Book of Tea quoted, “Tea is more than an idealization of the form of drinking; it is a religion of the art of life.” Emphasizing simplicity and appreciation, every aspect of the Japanese ceremony is carefully and methodically planned, from the location where it is held to the teaware that is used, every detail is prepared with an awareness of peace, serenity and tranquility.

The practical preparation begins with a formal printed invitation to each guest, inviting them to prepare themselves inwardly so that, the day of the event, they can attend with a calm focused presence, leaving behind the cares of the world. If there is food served, that should all be prepared ahead of time so that the ceremony itself is a serene and uncomplicated event.

Formality is part of the ceremony’s beauty, as the guests are seated and the liturgy of cleaning the matcha tools and preparing the matcha in front of the guests begins. This is done so that guests can show appreciation for the teaware, often passed down for generations in a family. Guests can also admire a host’s skillset in gracefully preparing the matcha.

Matcha is served in a single tea bowl, and passed from one guest to the next. Each guest is expected to admire the bowl, take a sip, wipe the rim of the bowl and pass it to the next in line. Once each guest has had a drink of tea and the bowl returns to the host, it is ceremonially washed and cleaned. Guests take a moment then to admire the teaware, gently examining the tools and offering nods of respect and admiration to the host.

In Japan, tea is about a moment of simplicity...a pause to honor those elementary aspects of life where imperfection is revered. It’s an intentional break from the speed and complication of everyday living - something we all need from time to time.

**FIREPOT’S MENU OF JAPANESE TEAS INCLUDES:**

- **Gyokuro**
  A shaded, umami-rich green tea

- **Genmaicha**
  A savory green tea blend with toasted sticky rice

- **Amai Matcha**
  An already sweetened matcha for lattes, baking and cooking

- **Ceremonial Matcha**
  A high grade matcha for matcha shots and drinks

- **Kukicha**
  An alkalizing, low caffeine, light and flavorful green tea made from the twigs of the tea plant.
TIPS FOR THROWING A JAPANESE TEA PARTY

Music

Find our playlist on Spotify (Search for Nomadic Tea Party: Japan) for the slow, meditative and spiritual music of Japan that is, like Japanese culture, highly ritualized and enchanting.

Setting the Table

Start by creating a simple, serene setting with a calm and peaceful ambiance. Make sure that when your guests arrive, it is clean and uncluttered. Once clean, set the space with fresh flowers, candles and natural incense. Then, select your favorite teaware and place it on your tea table. In Japan, great pride is taken in teaware and it is often used by one family for generations. You can send your guests an invitation ahead of time and share with them the Nomadic Tea Party: Japan playlist as well as this guide to prepare them for the gathering.

Bites

The food that you serve at the tea party will be influenced by the exact tea that you are serving, the weather and season, and your mood! You can choose to simply serve tea alone, to complement your tea with several courses of sweet and savory bites, or to prepare a simple and delicate plate of Japanese tea sweets. In Japan, before a Tea Ceremony, cha-keiseki is served. It includes rice, soups and myriad seasonal and local dishes. Guests also sometimes receive sake and a small sweet.

Parting Gift

Wagashi, small and beautiful Japanese tea sweets, are available online and can be packaged in a small box or bag to be given to guests on their way out. You can also send them home with a bag of the tea that you served at the party.
Japanese Matcha Accessories

CEREMONIAL MATCHA BOWL - CHAWAN
Matcha bowls typically have a wide, flat base and straight edges to help facilitate whisking. They are sometimes great works of art and kept in families over generations. Chawan are classically handmade in the Japanese style of wabi-sabi, which, simply stated, means “perfectly imperfect.” Wabi-sabi is the mindset of understanding and embracing imperfections for a more peaceful life.

MATCHA WHISK - CHASEN
The Matcha whisk is made of hand-stripped bamboo. Whisk your matcha in a “W” shape until it is frothy, without scraping the whisk on the bottom of the bowl. This protects the longevity of your whisk and creates a perfectly frothy cup.

MATCHA WHISK HOLDER - KUSENAOSHI
To maintain your chasen, keep it on a whisk holder to hold its shape and durability.

MATCHA SPOON - CHASHAKU
This tool is a bamboo spoon for scooping matcha into your chakoshi or chawan.

MATCHA SIFTER - CHAKOSHI
A strainer, a more modern matcha tool, sifts matcha powder into your chawan to ensure a smooth texture.
### Maple Ginger Matcha Latte

**YOU WILL NEED**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 tsp of Firepot Ceremonial Matcha</th>
<th>6 oz oat milk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>½ oz maple syrup</td>
<td>½ oz ginger juice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TO MAKE**

1. Prepare your ceremonial matcha by sifting the matcha powder into a bowl and whisking with the hot water until frothy.

2. Add the maple syrup to the prepared matcha and whisk until blended.

3. Heat the oat milk in a saucepan over medium heat.

4. Pour the matcha and maple syrup mixture into a cup or mug. Then, pour the warmed oat milk over the matcha and enjoy!

### Ginger Juice

**YOU WILL NEED**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5 oz fresh ginger (peeled and cut into chunks)</th>
<th>3 cups warm water</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2-4 Tbsp raw honey</td>
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<tr>
<td>½ oz turmeric (optional)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**TO MAKE**

1. Add all ingredients to a blender or food processor.

2. Process until the ginger is broken down to a pulp and the water is brightly colored.

3. Pour through a fine mesh strainer into an airtight container.

4. Store in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.
Japanese Genmaicha Whiskey

YOU WILL NEED

2 oz of steeped Firepot Genmaicha
2 oz of Japanese whiskey

TO MAKE

1. Steep Firepot Genmaicha to double strength*
2. Strain the genmaicha into a cup or mason jar and chill.
3. Pour the Japanese whiskey into the steeped genmaicha and stir until combined.
4. Pour over ice.

*Use twice the amount of tea or half the amount of water called for in the steeping directions.
Green Tea Edamame

On the north shore of Hawaii’s Big Island, there is a cool little sushi shop that is the best on the island! They serve regional sushi with additions like macadamia nuts, papaya and local Ahi and Otsu. It’s called Sushi Rock and they make a tasty green tea edamame that inspired this recipe.

Edamame, boiled young soybeans, have been a part of Japanese cuisine since the 1200s. They are Japan’s version of the Southern United States Lowcountry’s boiled peanuts. Packed with protein and fiber and low in fat and calories, edamame is known to be a drinking food, commonly served at izakayas (gastro-pubs) in Japan. While edamame does seem to be the perfect companion to a refreshing Japanese beer, it is equally delicious with Genmaicha, a steamed green tea with roasted rice.

YOU WILL NEED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 lb frozen soybeans, “edamame”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 tbsp toasted sesame oil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Tbsp Firepot Genmaicha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 cups water</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 lemon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toasted nori strips, cut with scissors into narrow strips (optional)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

YOU WILL NEED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kosher salt to taste</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 lemon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toasted nori strips, cut with scissors into narrow strips (optional)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TO MAKE

1. Steep the genmaicha in 3 cups of 170 degree water for 2 minutes.
2. Decant the tea into a soup pot.
3. Repeat steps 1 and 2, re-steeping the same tea leaves. Set aside the steeped tea leaves.
4. Bring steeped tea to a boil.
5. Add frozen soybeans to the pot. Boil for 6 minutes.
6. Meanwhile, add sesame oil to a frying pan or wok and bring to medium heat.
7. When cooked, drain soybeans and toss them in the frying pan or wok with 4 teaspoons of the steeped tea leaves. Add salt to taste.
8. Pile the seasoned edamame in a serving bowl with lemon chunks. Top with extra salt and toasted nori strips if desired.
Green Tea Mochi (part 1)

MAKE THE GREEN TEA FLAVORED BEAN PASTE

**YOU WILL NEED**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>12 oz bag of white/red beans (pick your favorite, it's just a base that flavor will be added to. I find that black beans carry more inherent savory flavor, therefore I do not use them for sweetening.)</th>
<th>2 Tbsp Firepot Anai Matcha Powder</th>
<th>1 Tbsp maple syrup or honey (optional, if beans are too dry during mashing)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**TO MAKE**

1. The night before you serve, pour the bag of beans into a pot, cover with one inch of water, and soak them overnight.
2. When you are ready to begin, drain the beans. Heat in a small pot over medium heat, add the Firepot Anai Matcha Powder, sugar, and mix well.
3. Taste test, this will be the flavor filling the rice dough. After about fifteen minutes the beans should begin to break down.
4. At this time, use any tool you might normally use to mash potatoes. If the beans are still a bit dry, add a tablespoon of honey (or maple syrup).
5. Mash until the mixture becomes a paste, transfer to a bowl, and set aside in the refrigerator. Keep in mind, the mixture will become more solid as it cools.

MAKE THE MOCHI DOUGH

**YOU WILL NEED**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2 cups glutinous rice flour (see like Mochiko®)</th>
<th>2 Tbsp white sugar</th>
<th>½ cup water (separately)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**TO MAKE**

1. In a large bowl, mix together all dry ingredients and stir with a fork, until well incorporated.
2. Add one cup of warm water.
3. Begin mixing and kneading the dough. It will resemble cookie dough. If your dough is too crumbly, add water a teaspoon at a time until you have reached the desired texture.
4. Set aside with a damp cloth over the top of the bowl.
Green Tea Mochi (part 2)

ASSEMBLE YOUR MOCHI

*Note, using cornstarch on your surface will keep the dough from sticking. Likewise, regularly dipping your fingers into a mixture of ½ cup of water and 1 Tbsp of oil will make the dough easier to manage.

YOU WILL NEED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sandwich bag that seals</td>
<td>1 1/2 cup cornstarch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deep stew pot</td>
<td>2 paper plates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>metal strainer</td>
<td>spoon/scoop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tin foil - torn into small squares for each piece of mochi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TO MAKE

1. Take the bean paste out of the fridge and scoop it into a sandwich bag, much like you would with icing. Snip a hole in one corner until the diameter of the hole is close to 1/2 inch. Set aside.

2. To prepare for steaming, place your strainer inside the pot, and fill the pot with water to a level about 1 inch below the strainer. Remove the strainer. Set the pot of water on the burner you intend to use and complete the next few steps.

3. With the dough, tear off tablespoon-sized portions, and use your fingers to create a small, rounded, disc.

4. For each disc, using your bag of bean paste, squeeze a thumb-sized amount into the center.

STEAM YOUR MOCHI

TO MAKE

1. Bring your pot of water to boil over high heat.

2. Place a few balls inside the strainer, each with a sheet of tin foil under them. Be sure to not let them touch. Place the strainer inside the pot and cover.

3. Pour cornstarch onto the paper plate. After about 15-20 minutes, you will know the mochi is done because it will be more translucent, very sticky, and soft.

4. Take the strainer out of the pot. Dip your fingers in the oil water. Use a spoon to scoop the mochi balls out and into the cornstarch, one by one. Use your fingers to roll them, and coat with cornstarch.

5. Bring the sides of the rice-dough-disc up, and pinch it together around the paste.

6. Place each ball onto a paper plate to wait for the boiling water.

7. Repeat this process to finish out the entire batch of green tea mochi.

8. Then, begin the process of steaming the mochi:

Lastly, place each ball on the second paper plate.

5. Repeat this method until all of the Mochi balls are piled on your paper plate.

6. Decorate with a sprinkle of matcha powder.