

Lesson 4 Read More

The History of Afternoon Tea

Tea Time, also known as "Afternoon Tea," is a beloved English tradition. It is all about gathering with family and friends to enjoy tea and tasty treats between 3:30 and 5:00 p.m.

Where did this English tradition come from? It has a charming history that started in the late 19th century. Back then, the upper classes in England had different eating habits from what we have today. They had a light breakfast and a late dinner, leaving a big gap between meals, which made people feel quite hungry and tired by the late afternoon.

Sometime around 1840, Anna Russell, the 7th Duchess of Bedford, complained of a "sinking feeling" and requested that some light food and a pot of tea be brought to her private living quarters to help with her afternoon hunger. This light food probably included bread, butter, and perhaps biscuits.

The idea proved so successful that it soon became routine, and the duchess decided to invite a few of her friends to her private rooms for tea in the afternoon. A new social event in which the invited guests would have an opportunity to meet friends, catch up on the latest news, and discuss recent events was born. What began as a practical solution to afternoon hunger has turned into a major part of British culture. Afternoon Tea has become a classic way to enjoy tea, small sandwiches, baked goods with jam, along with various treats.

This tradition has changed over time. While it might not be as common today, it still holds a special place in the hearts of those who appreciate its elegant charm.