



A Spot of tea

National Tea Month promotes consumption of the healthy beverage that also battles winter temperatures

By Amanda Herzberg
Staff Reporter

It's tea time.

January is celebrated as National Hot Tea Month, according to TeaUSA.org. This title was given to January as it is often considered the heart of winter, and prime time for colds and the flu. The goal of National Hot Tea Month is to combat these illnesses by raising awareness of the immune-boosting effects of drinking hot tea, as well as other health benefits.

Although this month highlights tea, sales associates at Teavana in the West County Mall of St. Louis sell the drink and accessories year-round, and teapots line the glass store front floor to ceiling. From earthy clay to clear glass, the pots vary as much as the teas they are built to accommodate. Teavana customers enter the tea shop lazily as free hot tea samples and hushed Asian-inspired music welcome tea drinkers of every de-

gree. And they do all this in celebration of National Hot Tea Month. Well, maybe.

In a distinctive tea-loving, and tea-inspired atmosphere, the aspiration for tea awareness is a daily charge at any Teavana store location. Sales associate Lauren Ward said their goal at Teavana is to create what she called a "culture of tea," regardless of the month.

"Not much changes for us," Ward said. "We're always all about tea."

Sales associate Katie Wardden said the numerous health benefits of tea are a

major draw for many tea drinkers, which is why the drink deserves its own month.

"Tea has antioxidants, and some teas have other healing ingredients, like chamomile, which acts as a natural pain reliever."

Both Wardden and Ward agreed that Teavana is popular because it opens the eyes of consumers who think tea comes only in black and in tea bags. In fact, there are dozens of tea varieties — white, green, black, tea bags or pure leaf form and numerous flavors.

"Most people, when they come into Teavana, say, 'Wait, I didn't know tea could be like this,'" Ward said, referencing the loose tea leaf form and the various choices.

Junior Maggie Barden said she recently learned of her own affini-

ty for tea. After spending a semester abroad in France, Barden's host mom got her hooked on the hot beverage, as she consumed it two or three times every day.

Barden said she is aware of some of the health benefits presented by regular tea consumption, but drinks it mainly for the caffeine and the way it tastes.

"I'm still learning a whole lot," Barden said of the drink.

Despite only having basic knowledge of its benefits, health experts would approve of Barden's newly acquired tea-drinking habits. Hot tea has been shown to provide a slew of health-related benefits when consumed on a regular basis.

Green tea acts as a powerful disease prevention agent, helps prevent allergic flare-ups, contains anti-aging properties, and might work to lower blood pressure and cholesterol, according to "The Top 100 Immunity Boosters," a book by Charlotte Haigh.

However, green tea is not the only beneficial tea brew. Drinking black tea might quicken the body's response to bacteria and viruses, according to teaUSA.org. In consuming 20 ounces of black tea per day, a body can produce up to five times the amount of germ-fighting immune cells as those who consume the same amount of coffee.

Nutrition professor Liz Jorn said according to an article in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, tea is a rich source of flavonoids, which are known to protect the body from heart disease.

National Hot Tea month or not, tea has proven itself to be a smart addition to any diet. Whether simply to enjoy a delicious flavored beverage, keep warm through the frigid Kirksville winter or stay healthy, it might be best to think tea.

Know your tea



White Tea

Has more potent anti-cancer properties than processed teas



Black Tea

Has the highest caffeine content, might reduce stroke risk



Chamomile

Antioxidants might prevent diabetes symptoms



Green Tea

Might burn fat and improve cholesterol levels



Cast Iron Teapot

www.target.com, \$29.99



To-Go Tumbler

www.sitedesignnyc.com, \$24.00



Chalk Teapot

www.dreaminplastic.com, \$24.00

Tempting teapots

