

## Get Romantic With Tea

When it comes to romance, many set the mood with a glass of pinot noir, or a bubbly flute of champagne. Don't forget that "tea for two" can also brew romance, if you pay mind to the presentation.

Tea can be poured in a porcelain mug, a metal goblet or a shallow saucer. Some like to gulp it down, others swish and slurp, while some take the time to delicately sip their tea from fine china cups placed atop dainty saucers. The likes and dislikes of tea drinkers may vary, but tea accessories are becoming a big part of the tea-making exercise.

Making a great cuppa means starting with the basics. The kettle is where every fine brew begins. Some people have boiling water for years in the same metal kettles. Others enjoy the tea of generations in their inherited kettles. These people have been using the same kettle for years and are quite content with the results.

If you're not so lucky, it's time to seek out a kettle to brew your perfect tea. When shopping for a kettle, ensure that the lid fits tightly. If the lid is loose, there is the risk of hot water blowing into your face. Ensure that the handle won't get hot, and that it is securely fastened to the body of the kettle. The size of the kettle is equally important. If you are only going to brew one or two cups at a time, don't buy a big kettle.

The teapot is another very important accessory, and great care must be taken in choosing the right one. A two- or four-cup porcelain teapot is perfect for black teas. Green or oolong teas should be brewed in a Japanese or Chinese teapot. Herbal infusions are best suited to clear glass teapots.

When choosing your new teapot, be sure that it has a tight-fitting lid, balanced proportions, a smooth and polished surface and a spout that doesn't leak. Nothing spoils the mood like a leaky teapot.

The tea infuser is another must-have accessory for true tea lovers. The most common form is the wire mesh style, but there are also ball infusers, infuser presses and traditional bamboo infusers available. An ideal infuser should fit the entire mug or extend deeply into the teapot.

Those who truly love their tea or are a tad finicky about their brew might also have a measuring teaspoon, thermometer, digital timer, tightly sealed storage containers, a delicate tea cozy and elegant cups and saucers. The tea tray is the last link in the chain of tea accessories, and the one that holds it all together.

When romance is brewing, pour some tea for two, and dazzle your love with all the right accessories.