**PERSUASIVE SPEECH**

**FOR**

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It’s time to “spill the tea” about something that has been around for **THOUSANDS** of years and is so much a part of our existence, we don’t even give it a second thought... it’s always been there.... it seems innocuous yet ubiquitous. It has slaked the thirst of human curiosity and well being. Its benefits and legendary powers seem to have easily withstood the tests of time... and because it’s so much a part of so many cultures throughout the world, we tend to overlook its simple yet vital contribution to our health, history, and social progress. Yes. It’s time to “spill the tea”.... about **TEA**.

The fact that there are colloquial expressions on the subject just proves how important tea is in our lives... and has been for millennia. According to an article entitled “The History of Tea,” found on the website, [www.alimetarium.org](http://www.alimetarium.org), there are Chinese texts dating back to **BEFORE** the Common Era that tell us that at the time, there was a drink made from plants that was reserved for the pleasure of the people of the imperial court. The article goes on to follow its progress to the second century, when Buddhist monks discovered the stimulating properties of the drink..... and so we have the earliest witnesses that learned the meaning and purpose of being a “caffeine freak.” (**Wait for the laugh**). History and civilization stayed the course when it came to the evolution and importance of the beverage. Over the centuries, the popularity of tea has grown tremendously and consuming it has contributed to a global cultural phenomenon. Asian cultures have elevated the preparation to an art.... from the ritual Japanese tea ceremony to the popularity of tea houses in both Asia and Europe, legend tells us that by the seventh century, tea was being exported to Tibet and then Korea. By the twelfth century, its popularity hit its stride, and by the 17th century, the Dutch, thanks to missionaries that brought back the beverage from their travels to the Far East, tea was introduced to European cultures. The tea spilled and spread from the Dutch to the Germans to the English and then the Russians.... and there was no looking back. A cultural, medicinal, and dietary tradition was born. All it took was one Chinese Emperor that didn’t feel well. Emperor Shen Nong, considered the “father of agriculture” at the time, traveled the known world searching for medicinal plants..... (**If you want to make a joke, you can say**).... Well.... now we know who started **THAT**!, (**And wait for the laugh**). As he sat under a tree, one day, not feeling well and definitely feeling thirsty, he boiled some water to drink. As luck would have it, some bitter leaves fell into his cup. He was desperate and drank it anyway. He realized he felt better.... and an entire culture was born.

What Shen Nong discovered instinctively has been proven time and again throughout the course of civilization. Tea is good for you. It has many benefits beyond the social, historical, and cultural aspects. We don’t have to look too far to learn just how good it is. In an article titled, “Eight Health Benefits of Drinking Hot Tea,” we can quickly realize that we don’t even need eight reasons to be convinced.... Tea is said to enhance and maybe even improve the health of your eyes. Drinking tea can also reduce the risk of stroke, sharpen our memory, improve digestion, prevent tooth decay, lower blood pressure, diminish stress and anxiety, and strengthen our immune systems.

There is a tremendous variety of teas. Each one has its own distinctive flavor, aroma, and possible... or probable, health benefits. Many have historical significance. From green tea to black tea.... from the smoky and exotic Lapsang Soochong to the elegant and perfumed Earl Grey... from chamomile to mint to other herbal teas, the rituals and ingestion of this beverage spans time, cultures, and a huge variety of tastes. There’s one thing I **DO** have to mention, though. As with any good thing in life, moderation is important. While the way I have praised the properties of tea will make us want to drink it forever and always... in **all ways**... keep in mind that too much is not great either. As with any caffeinated products, having too much caffeinated tea can cause anxiety... restlessness... the “jitters.” It can have a bad effect on our digestive systems, and some people and doctors have found green tea may not go with certain prescribed medications.... so check before you grab that tea bag!!

Many famous people have had their say about tea. Eleanor Roosevelt said, “A woman is like a teabag. You can’t tell how strong she is until you put her in hot water.” Mick Jagger said, “I got nasty habits; I take tea at three.” Moby said, “I like tea and yoga.... but I don’t do yoga.” (**Wait for the laugh**). I say, whether you like milk or lemon.... honey or sugar... black or green... caffeinated, herbal, or .... whatever.... tea soothes our souls.... inspires our thoughts... quenches our thirst.... and connects us through time, culture, tradition, and history. **DRINK UP!!!** Thank you!!