

# Downtowner

Not a Location... A Frame of Mind!

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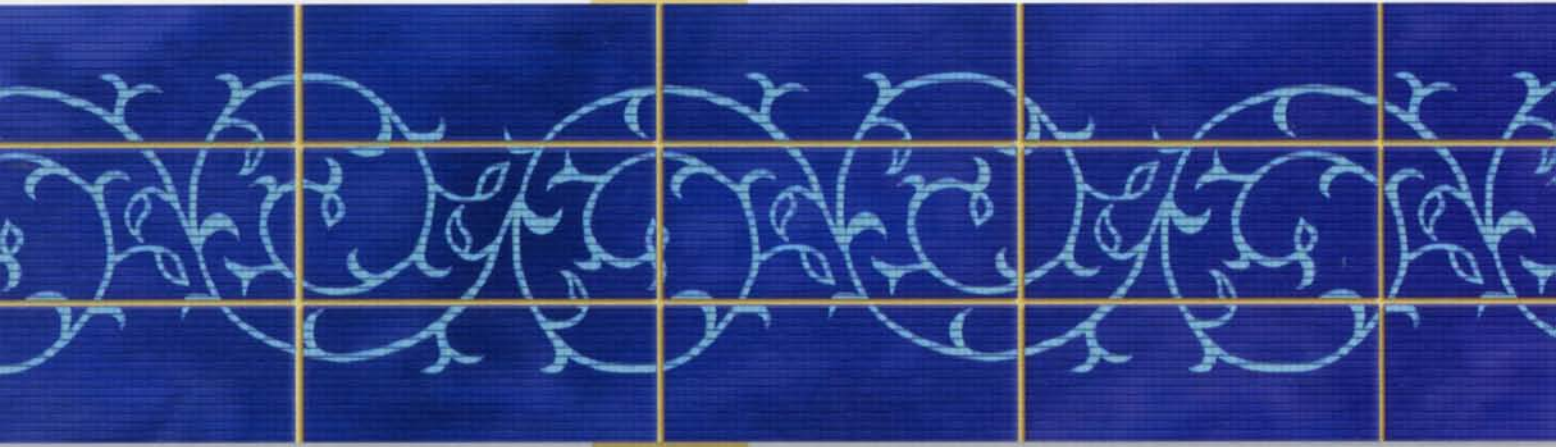
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"Love and scandal are the best sweeteners of tea"

English novelist Henry Fielding,  
*Love in Several Masques*

# THE Hip Sip

by Michelle Hurni



Ordering a "cuppa" tea has become as complicated as changing cell phone plans. So many choices, ranging from oolong and chai to a spectrum of colors: black, white or green. Want to lose a few pounds? Order white tea. How about reduce your cholesterol? Have a taste of the green. Increase your concentration? Sip some black gold.

The growing trend is tea and nearly half of Americans take the plunge on a daily basis. Second only to water as the world's most consumed beverage, tea has the ability to boost immunity, reduce the risk of cancer and slow the aging process. If that's not enough to make you steep the loose stuff, then follow its path to relaxation.

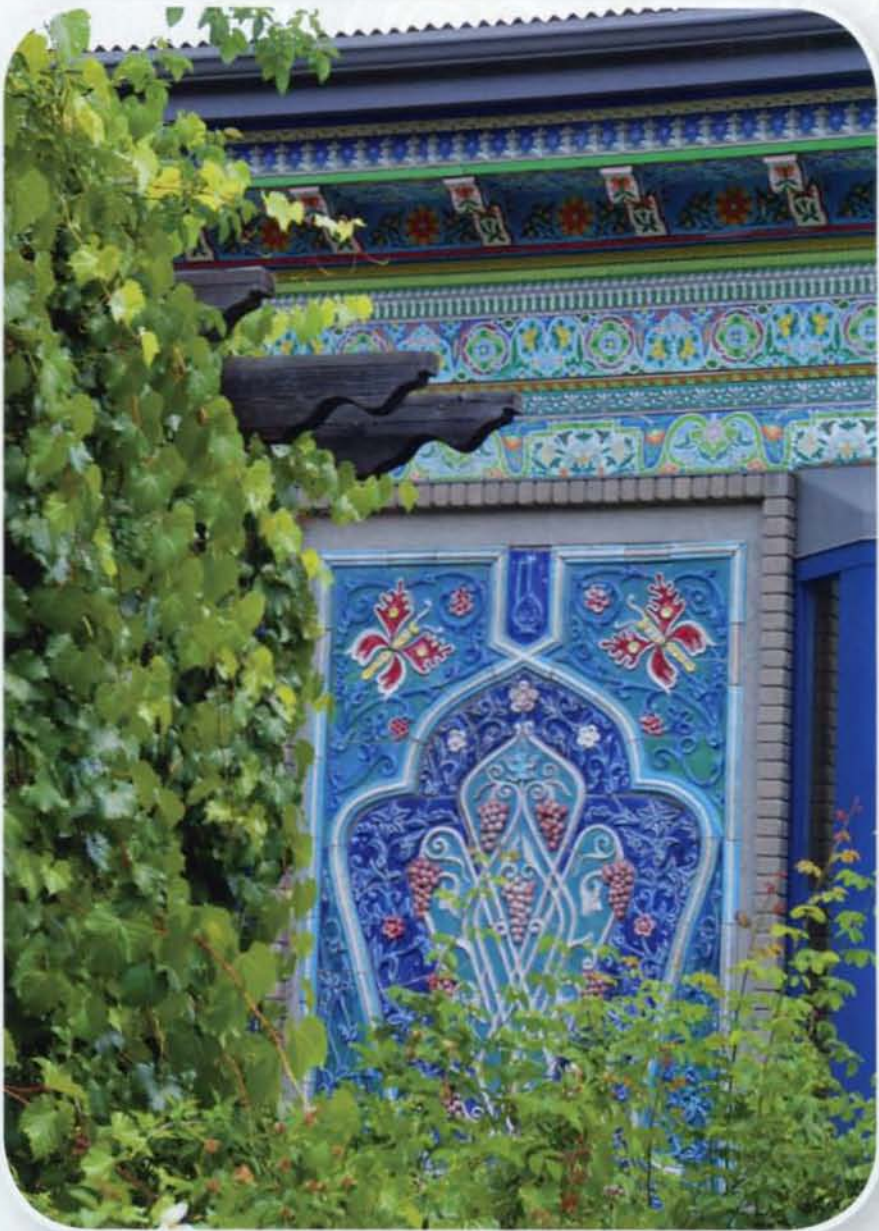
Loose leaf tea is being embraced by the highly stressed and largest generation in the U.S., the baby boomers. No longer just available in a bag, tea has become a luxury gourmet beverage. Touted as a stress reducer, you only have to pour a cup of peppermint and let the scent invade your nostrils to know relaxation is just around the corner.

Now forget the loose stuff, or even bags, and let's chat chai. For true Masala chai, this black tea is infused with an exotic array of spices, including cardamom, cinnamon, ginger, star anise, peppercorn and cloves. Add in some plain white sugar and whole milk and find out why chai has become the second most popular latte with Colorado leading that charge. Seek out a chai wallah for a plastic cup of the real thing on the streets of the Middle East and India. Closer to home, chai is available in coffee shops from coast to coast. You can even make your own at home from a bag, powder or syrup.

Scared you'll be sucked into your worst Victorian nightmare if you drink too much tea? The Dushanbe Tea House in Boulder will set that stereotype straight. Donated by its sister city of Dushanbe, Tajikistan the hand-carved and hand-painted building has become a gathering place for anyone wanting to sit and sip.

Be careful, though, there are rules to drinking the stuff and you don't want to annoy the tea nazi. According to the Dushanbe Tea House, you never extend your pinkie when drinking tea. Don't swirl tea around like a glass of wine, and never ever jiggle your tea bag by the string.

Barring a fatal faux pas, there's no reason why even the newest tea drinker can't enjoy a cup at home, or in a tea house nearby. Just don't forget to tuck in your pinkie.



A wide selection at Dushanbe Tea House.