

# The Tea Room Times

Presented by: The White Heron Tea & Gifts

## Happy Hot Tea Month!

As the weather gets cooler during the first part of the year, it seems only fitting that we would celebrate a beverage that makes us feel warm and fuzzy inside. Yes, I'm talking about tea...the second most consumed beverage world-wide (behind water). However, in the United States, tea ranks only in the top ten of beverages, and over 80% of tea consumed is iced.

Despite not being the number one preferred way to enjoy tea, hot tea, long thought to be time consuming to make and often not tasting the greatest (especially if using largely commercial brands), actually has a lot of benefits for your body.

For many people, simply holding a nice cup of hot tea and sipping it provides a type of relaxation that is rarely achieved today. With our busy lives, we rarely take time out to just be, and enjoying a nice hot cup of tea gives us that break, releasing stress, and warming us from the inside out.



In addition to the relaxation aspect, tea has many other benefits, including but not limited to helping control blood pressure and blood sugar, boosting immunity, increasing bone density, lowering cholesterol, decreasing overall body inflammation, and increasing memory. These benefits are derived from the actual *Camellia Sinensis* tea plant, and includes black tea, green tea, oolong, white tea, yellow tea, and dark tea (puerh). Herbals, not including the tea plant and often called tisanes, have different benefits.

The reason the *Camellia Sinensis* plant is so important is because it contains certain chemical compounds that help the cells in our body to respond positively to it, and to replace damaged cell parts with good to make our cells work properly. Those chemicals include L-theanine (an amino acid that triggers relaxation and the "umami" feeling), and catechins (a natural antioxidant that helps prevent cell damage and prevents the formation of free radicals in the body, that ultimately protect our cells from being damaged).

Knowing all of the positive benefits that tea provides our bodies, I encourage you to take time each day during this new year to sip a nice warm cuppa or two and give your body the boost it needs to be the best that it can be.

## Winter 2025

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**The White Heron Tea & Gifts, as seen on Daytime TV, ABC Action News, Bay News 9, and House Hunters. Featured in Tea Time Magazine, Destination Tea, Tampa Bay Magazine, Suncoast News, and Tampa Bay Times. Voted Best Tearoom in Tampa Bay by readers of the Tampa Bay Times Best of the Best (2024, 2023, 2022, 2021, 2020)**

# Dear Friends and Tea Lovers.....

I can't believe the start of another year is upon us. Every year seems to pass faster and faster, and the one thing I wish for these days is for time to slow down.

It seems like only yesterday I was hosting our very first tea party in our twelve-seater tearoom, and here we are, nine years later, still serving tea in our original location in historic downtown New Port Richey, only now we over triple the seats.

Boy, how times have changed over the past nine years. From a sleepy little town where only a few people had faith that our tearoom would work (thank you Mario!) and too many storefront vacancies to count, to now being a part of a bustling community with not a storefront available, we have been honored to be a part of the renaissance of our hometown.



Looking back over the last nine years, it's humbling to see our transition, despite the challenges. And boy, have there been some challenges. Deciding to open a business in a struggling downtown district is a risk, one that I've watched so many other business owners take and fail. For those of you who know me, failure is never an option, and so I put everything I had into creating The White Heron. Of course, I knew there would be challenges along the way, but no one could have predicted a worldwide pandemic just as we were hitting our stride.

Did you know that it takes up to five years for businesses to really develop? The pandemic came as we hit our four-year mark, just as we were hitting our stride. Immediately, it was almost like we were starting over again. It has taken several years for the repercussions of the pandemic to lift to where guests were starting to return to us in pre-pandemic numbers.

Then, earlier this year (2024), with the rising costs of goods, everyone was impacted on what they could afford. The tearoom also felt those impacts as costs for us to do business rose across the board. It was a scary time for us, but with some out-of-the-box thinking by our team, we were able to make some adjustments to our tea offerings that have helped us keep our tea service price the same. It has always been important to me that our tea service remain at a level where guests can afford to come and enjoy tea in our beautiful tearoom. I really felt we did a good job of that this year, and then the unthinkable happened....

This Fall, our community was hit by not one, but two major hurricanes. While we managed to avoid a direct hit, the hit the community and our residents took was unprecedented. In late September, Hurricane Helene brought record flooding to our coast, impacting a large portion of our community, and many of our tearoom guests. While the tearoom was spared from physical damage, the business loss has been hard to overcome. Then, just three weeks later we faced more days closed due to another hurricane, Milton.

These two storms didn't just impact the tearoom, but the entire downtown area. From days closed due to the storms, to the lasting impact of a community destroyed, I can honestly say the future for the tearoom and many other businesses downtown is uncertain.

The White Heron has been a love of my life for the past nine years, and as we start this new year, I am anxious to look ahead to better times. Times filled with our community being able to return to their homes. Times where our downtown is a vibrant and thriving epicenter for families, residents, and visitors to shop, dine, and enjoy. Times when our tearoom is so full that you have to wait weeks to get a reservation (we were there in 2019). Times when we can all be together again.

We can't ask for anything from those impacted by this year's storms. They are already dealing with so much and they need to work on rebuilding their lives before they can come back to us. But, for those who weren't affected, who didn't suffer damage or lose parts of their homes, we need you. We have built a downtown community, a tearoom, a place for you to come. Now what we need is for you to come and share in all we have to offer. Come to the tearoom and have tea. Come shop in some of the cutest and most unique local shops around. Come walk the streets and stop into some of our fabulous restaurants. Bring your friends and family. Bring your visitors. Bring yourself. Just come.

We look forward to seeing you this year, not just for tea, but downtown too. Together we will keep our businesses thriving and our community strong, not just for today but for the future that is to come.

Wishing you a "Tea-riffic" 2025.

*Kelly M. Hackman*

PS. If you haven't checked out my book *Her Story: Kelly's Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times* (2020) yet, stop into our tearoom. It's my entertaining and fun perspective of my life during a very hard year, 2020. I'll be happy to sign your copy!

# Upcoming Events

## January 2025

### National Hot Tea Day

**Sunday, January 12, 2025**

Stop into The White Heron and enjoy a hot tea-to-go for just \$1.99. Our Tea Sommelier will be on-site to tell you all about tea and help you pick the perfect tea for you to enjoy. Special available from 11 am to 2 pm.

### Tearoom Closed - Cotee River Bike Fest

**Saturday, January 18 and Sunday, January 19, 2025**

## 9 Year Anniversary Week - January 22 - 26, 2025

### Tea With Kelly

**Friday, January 24, 2025 - 2:00 pm**

Celebrate 9 years of tea at The White Heron by joining me for tea. We will enjoy traditional Afternoon Tea while we share memories of our tearoom and more. Bring your tea questions, learn about The White Heron, and enjoy some of my tea stories. Limited spaces available, advance reservation required. Cost is \$24.95 plus tax and gratuity (same as daily tea service).

### Tea Leaf Reading with Dawne

**Friday, January 24, 2025 - 4:00 pm - 7:00 pm**

Have you ever wanted to know what is in store for your future? What are tea leaves trying to tell you? Join our tea leaf reader, Dawne, as she looks into your destiny and answers your burning questions, by reading your tea leaves. Each guest will have a 15-minute one-on-one session. Guests need to arrive 15 minutes prior to their scheduled reading time to enjoy a cup of tea and prepare their leaves. \$25 per person. Your tea leaf reading time will be provided to you when you register. Call (727) 203-3504 to reserve your tea leaf reading time.

### Scone Sunday

**Sunday, January 26, 2025 - 11:00 am - 1:00 pm**

Join us for a relaxing Sunday afternoon in our Tea Parlour. Scone Sunday will feature our "Cream Tea" option, including a pot of tea of your choosing, and two scones (one flavored, one plain) with Devonshire cream. You can enjoy our Cream Tea for the original price from 2016, for \$8.95 (plus tax and gratuity). (Current Cream Tea price - \$9.50). No reservation needed, just pop in from 11 am to 1 pm and enjoy this relaxing treat.

## February 2025

### Paint and Sip with Coastal Creations

**Thursday, February 6, 2025 at 6:00 pm**

Art and Tea? We can't think of a more lovely combination. Join us as we delve into our artistic side with a fun paint class from Coastal Creations. Held at the tearoom, we will be creating an adorable "Love" canvas while we sip on some delicious Valentine's inspired teas. \$40 per person includes all supplies, instructions, and tea. Visit [www.coastalcreationsNPR.com](http://www.coastalcreationsNPR.com) or call the tearoom to register.



### "Gal-entine's Tea Party

**Thursday, February 13, 2025 at 6:00 pm**

This night is all about the "Gals" in our lives. We need our gals for support, friendship, and what better way to enjoy them than with an enjoyable evening tea.

It's the perfect night to get dressed up, gather up your girlfriends and come join us for delicious tea-fare in our beautiful tearoom.

Galentine's Day Evening Tea is \$35 per person, plus tax and gratuity. Space is limited and reservations are required. Reserve your table by calling the tearoom at (727) 203-3504

### Tea Leaf Reading with Dawne

**Friday, February 28, 2025 - 4:00 pm - 7:00 pm**

See listing above for more information. \$25 per person. Your tea leaf reading time will be provided to you when you register. Call (727) 203-3504 to reserve your tea leaf reading time and pay for your visit.

## Join us in the Tea Parlour!

Did you know we offer walk-in service where you don't need a reservation?

Our Tea Parlour offers delicious pots of tea, scones, limited menu of tearoom favorites\*, and our quiche (coming January 2025) all without reservation.

Our Tea Parlour is open Wednesday - Friday from 11 am to 3 pm, and Sunday from 11 am to 1 pm.



\*Reservation required for Full Afternoon Tea Service in the tearoom. Only select tea sandwiches available in our Tea Parlour

## 5 Fun Facts About Tea

1. Tea used to be very expensive. It was kept in a locked tea chest in the parlor. The lady of the house was responsible for the tea and was often the only person with the key for the lock.

2. English tea gardens were the first public gathering place where women were allowed to mix with men publicly, without scandal or criticism.

3. In Ancient China, tea was a form of currency. Tea leaves were pressed into a brick. One side was scored so that it could easily be broken if change was needed.

4. There is a special name for when tea leaves uncurl as hot water is poured over them. It is called "the agony of the leaves."

5. Herbal teas are not actually teas because they do not contain leaves from the plant *Camellia Sinensis*. Instead, they are infusions made from the roots, leaves, flowers, seeds, and/or fruits of various plants and are often referred to as herbals or tisanes.

For more information about tea and proper steeping techniques, visit our website at [www.TheWhiteHeronFL.com](http://www.TheWhiteHeronFL.com)

## Thank You!

We, at The White Heron, would like to send a heartfelt "thank you" to the City of New Port Richey City Council, City Manager, City Clerk, and staff for designating January 2025 as Hot Tea Month in our beautiful City.



We appreciate your support in our mission to provide the best tea to consumers, and to focusing on tea as a health and wellness beverage for all to enjoy.



The White Heron Tea & Gifts  
Driftwood Tea Company  
6228 Grand Boulevard  
New Port Richey, Florida 34652

## A Tea To Fall In Love With Peppermint Patti

Fresh lovely mint combined with full flavored chocolate tea that is wonderfully reminiscent of an after-dinner mint. How decadent!



Luxury Ingredients: Black tea, Blackberry + Peppermint leaves, Natural flavors(organic compliant).

Teas From: Sri Lanka / Kenya / India / France / USA

Antioxidant Level: High

Caffeine Content: Medium

## Valentine's Tea Collection

During the "Season of Love" we invite you to enjoy our curated Valentine's Tea Collection.

This sampler highlights some of our favorite teas of the season, those often associated with Valentine's Day, including:

Chocolate Covered Strawberry (Herbal)  
Paris in Bloom (Black and White Tea)  
Vanilla Rose (Black Tea)

Each sampler comes with 1 ounce of the above selection of loose leaf tea, and Tea Brew bags to make your own teabags

**\$16.95**

Available at The White Heron beginning  
January 22nd, while supplies last.



## CONTACT US

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Visit us on the web at  
[www.thewhiteheronfl.com](http://www.thewhiteheronfl.com)  
Enjoy our tea at home. Visit our tea website at  
[www.driftwoodteacompany.com](http://www.driftwoodteacompany.com)

**Reservations required for tearoom services. Please call a minimum of 24 hours in advance.**

*\*Large parties are encouraged to call well in advance as the tearoom fills quickly.*