

SIX HERBAL TEAS · WHAT THEY DO · WHEN TO DRINK THEM

The Steep Book

Recipes, health benefits, and the best hour for every cup, with a clear signal on which teas are safe for your evening and which are better left to the daytime.

PUBLICATION INFORMATION

Copyright

The Steep Book
Hope Through Healing, One Cup at a Time

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Scripture quotations are from the King James Version of the Bible, which is in the public domain in the United States.

DEDICATION

For my family

For my grandmother and my mom,
whose love still warms every cup I pour.
You gave me resilience, faith, and a name I carry with pride.

And for my four children,
my joy, my reason to rise,
and the future I intend to be here for.

A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

The Name I Carry

This year, I turned fifty. And I started counting.

Not my birthdays, but theirs. My grandmother lived to 62. My mom lived to 58. Fifty is no longer just a number to me. It is the place where I stand close enough to see the years they never got to finish.

I do that math now, quietly, in the mornings. I am not afraid of the answer. I am paying attention to it.

If you have lost someone too soon, you know what I mean. Premature loss does not end at the funeral. It moves into your calendar. It sits beside you at every birthday and every doctor's visit. It whispers a question you never asked to carry: *Is this my road too?*

For a long time, I let that question run my life. I was a family therapist who could hold a room full of other people's sorrow. But I could not hold my own. I was grieving what we lost, and I was frightened of what we might lose again.

Then one day, I looked at my four children.

They do not need a mother who is brave about her grief. They need a mother who is *here*. Not for another few years, but for another forty. I want to be at their weddings and in their kitchens. I want to be the grandmother whose name they say with a smile, the way I say my own grandmother's name with love.

Wanting it was not enough. I had to choose it. Grief gives you two doors. One is called *what happened to us*. The other is called *what will I do about it*. I stood in that hallway for a long time, and then I walked through the second door.

I started in the oldest place I know, the kitchens of the women who raised me. I read. I asked questions. I went back to the herbal traditions that families have poured into cups for generations. Hibiscus. Ginger. Mint. I was not looking for a miracle. I was looking for a practice, something small enough to do on an ordinary Tuesday and powerful enough to say: *I am still here, and I intend to stay.*

A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

The Name I Carry, continued

I did not expect what happened next. Somewhere between the steeping and the sipping, the tea stopped being only tea. It became my reason to rise. It became research that turned into purpose, and purpose that turned into a future I could actually picture. At fifty, I found something to live *into*.

That is what this book is. These teas walk beside the care your doctor gives you. Before your first cup, please read *A Note on Your Health and Safety*.

But I will tell you what a warm cup can do. It can give you a moment to slow your breathing. It can give your hands something gentle to hold. It can turn five minutes into a promise you keep to yourself.

You may be reading this with a loss of your own. Maybe it is a mother, a grandmother, a father, a friend. Maybe you are worried your story is already written. Hear me, from one heart to another: *loss is part of your story, but it does not get to be the ending.* You get to write what happens next. You get to choose it, one cup and one day at a time.

So here is my prayer for you. My prayer is that this book helps you build a life you love, one small act of care at a time. May you be here to see your grandchildren’s faces light up when they say your name. May the people who love you have a hundred more Sunday dinners with you at the table. May they get the calls that begin with “I just wanted to hear your voice,” and may there be another birthday, and another, with you right in the middle of the laughter.

I carry my grandmother’s name. I carry my mom’s love. And I carry four reasons to stay.

To my grandmother and my mom: thank you for my name, and for everything it carries. You gave me a name, and I finally understand what it holds. It holds you. I’m carrying it forward, and I’m taking everyone with me.

So let’s begin. Put the kettle on. Let’s live long enough to be missed *late*.

With all my love,
Murdis LaToya Boston
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BEFORE YOU BREW

A Note on Your Health and Safety

Please read before your first cup. Herbs can cause side effects and change how medications work. This book is for education and enjoyment. It does not diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any condition. The author is a licensed family therapist. Consult a qualified healthcare professional for medical or herbal guidance.

Talk to your doctor or pharmacist first if you:
• Take medication for blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, heart conditions, thyroid conditions, or seizures
• Take blood thinners, lithium, sedatives, or water pills
• Are pregnant, trying to conceive, or nursing
• Have kidney, liver, gallbladder, or bile duct disease
• Have low blood pressure, reflux, Parkinson's disease, or an estrogen-sensitive condition
• Have surgery scheduled. Ask your surgical team which products to stop and when.
• Have allergies to plants, especially ragweed, daisies, or chrysanthemums

Never stop or change prescribed medication because of this book.

What to know about each herb

Hibiscus. May lower blood pressure. Ask about possible interactions with blood pressure or diabetes medication. Check with your clinician before use in pregnancy.

Cinnamon. Cassia typically contains more coumarin than Ceylon. Frequent or high intake can be a concern for people with liver disease. Ask about regular use if you take diabetes medicine.

Ginger and clove. Ask a pharmacist about regular or concentrated use if you take blood thinners. Ginger can cause heartburn. Ask your clinician first if you have gallstones.

Spearmint. If mint worsens your reflux, skip it.

Soursop leaf. Frequent long-term use has been associated with Parkinson-like symptoms. Ask your clinician before using it, especially if you have Parkinson's disease or take blood pressure or diabetes medicine. Avoid during pregnancy or nursing unless your clinician advises otherwise. Soursop is not a proven cancer treatment.

Dandelion. Ask about use with lithium, diuretics, or medicines that raise potassium. Avoid if you have a blocked bile duct unless your clinician advises otherwise.

Star anise. Use only food-grade Chinese star anise (*Illicium verum*) from a reputable source. Japanese star anise is toxic. Do not give star anise tea to infants or young children.

Moringa. The recipes use leaf only. Avoid root and bark, especially in pregnancy. Ask your pharmacist before regular use if you take blood pressure, blood sugar, or thyroid medication. Human interaction data are limited.

Chamomile. Can trigger allergies in people sensitive to ragweed and related plants. Ask about interactions with warfarin or sedatives.

Lemon balm. Ask a pharmacist before combining it with sedatives or thyroid medication. Human interaction data are limited.

Rose petals. Choose food-grade petals intended for culinary use. Florist roses may have been treated with products unsuitable for food.

Honey. Count honey as added sugar. Never give it to a child under 12 months.

Use, sourcing, and children

Buy herbs labeled for food or tea from reputable sellers. Store them dry and sealed, and discard any with mold or an unusual odor. Strength varies by product and preparation. Ask a pediatrician before giving herbal tea to a child.

Stop drinking the tea and contact your provider if you notice dizziness, unusual fatigue, rash, stomach pain, or a racing or irregular heartbeat. **Call 911 in an emergency**, including trouble breathing or collapse. For suspected poisoning, call **Poison Help at 1-800-222-1222** (U.S.).

Further reading
NIH NCCIH · Herb–Drug Interactions
Memorial Sloan Kettering · Graviola
Pediatrics · Star anise tea toxicity in infants
CDC · Foods and Drinks to Avoid or Limit

Individual responses vary. The author and publisher disclaim liability for adverse effects resulting from use of the information in this book.

How to read this book



Ruby Spice



Green Lull



Rose Calm



Bright Bitter



Anise Hush



Green Ember

SLEEP KEY

Evening-friendly

Soothing herbs. Fine after dinner and unlikely to keep you up.

SLEEP KEY

Daytime tea

Either gently stimulating, or a diuretic that sends you to the bathroom at 2 a.m. Drink it earlier.

CAFFEINE

All six teas are caffeine-free. Any alertness comes from warming spices and plant compounds, and it is mild. If you add green or black tea to a recipe, the sleep key no longer applies.

BREWING

Each recipe makes one 12 oz mug. Use water just off the boil, cover the mug while it steeps, and strain before sipping.

WHEN ARE YOU DRINKING?

All day · Morning · Afternoon · Evening · Bedtime

Showing all 6 teas and 6 new blends.



RECIPE · CAFFEINE-FREE

Ruby Spice

Hibiscus, ginger, clove and cinnamon. Tart, warm and the color of a garnet.

INGREDIENTS

1 tbsp	dried hibiscus flowers
3 slices	fresh ginger, unpeeled
3	whole cloves
1 stick	cinnamon (Ceylon if you drink it daily)

METHOD

1. Put everything in a mug or teapot.
2. Pour over 12 oz of boiling water and cover.
3. Steep 10 minutes, then strain. A squeeze of lemon turns it a brighter pink-red.

HEALTH BENEFITS

Ruby Spice

Heart and blood pressure

Several small studies link daily hibiscus tea with a modest drop in blood pressure.

Antioxidants

Hibiscus anthocyanins, clove's eugenol and cinnamon polyphenols all help the body manage oxidative stress.

Nausea and digestion

Ginger is among the best-studied natural remedies for nausea and an unsettled stomach.

Blood sugar support

Cinnamon may soften the glucose rise after a meal. The evidence is mixed, so treat it as a helper.

Inflammation and aches

Gingerols and eugenol have anti-inflammatory activity that people notice with muscle soreness.

Cold-weather comfort

Warming spices and hibiscus's natural vitamin C make this a go-to when you feel a cold coming on.

Daytime tea

MORNING	AFTERNOON	EVENING	BEDTIME

No caffeine, so it will not keep you up on its own. The warming spices wake some people up, and hibiscus is mildly diuretic. Enjoy it between breakfast and about 4 p.m.

Go gently if you have low blood pressure, take blood pressure medicine (especially hydrochlorothiazide) or blood thinners, are pregnant, or drink it all day. Cassia cinnamon is high in coumarin, so choose Ceylon for daily cups.

DID YOU KNOW

Hibiscus gets its ruby color from anthocyanins, the pigment family in blueberries. Add acid and it brightens; add baking soda and it goes blue-gray.

RITUAL

Hold the mug with both hands and name one thing from this morning you are glad you handled.



RECIPE · CAFFEINE-FREE

Green Lull

Soursop leaf and spearmint. Mellow, earthy and cooling.

INGREDIENTS

2 to 3	dried soursop leaves, torn (or 1 tbsp crumbled)
1 tbsp	dried spearmint (or a small handful fresh)

METHOD

1. Simmer the soursop leaves in 14 oz of water for 5 minutes.
2. Take off the heat, add the spearmint and cover.
3. Steep 5 more minutes, strain and sip slowly.

HEALTH BENEFITS

Green Lull

Winding down

Soursop leaf has been a calming evening tea in Caribbean, West African and Latin American homes for generations.

Digestive comfort

Spearmint relaxes the gut and eases gas and bloating after a meal.

Antioxidants

The leaves contain flavonoids and phenolic compounds that show antioxidant activity in lab studies.

Blood pressure

Leaf extracts lowered blood pressure in animal studies. Human evidence is still missing.

Gentle on the system

Spearmint's main aroma compound is carvone, which makes it milder and sweeter than peppermint.

Evening-friendly

MORNING | AFTERNOON | **EVENING** | **BEDTIME**

Calming and caffeine-free, so it suits the last hour before bed. Keep it to a few nights a week rather than every night.

Go gently if you are pregnant or nursing, or take blood pressure or diabetes medicine. Heavy, long-term use of soursop has been linked to nerve problems, so occasional cups are the smart pattern. Soursop is not a proven treatment for cancer or any other disease.

DID YOU KNOW

Soursop is also called graviola. The fruit is eaten fresh and blended into drinks, while the leaf is the part used for tea.

RITUAL

Before the first sip, take three slow breaths and let one worry from today stay in the day.



RECIPE · CAFFEINE-FREE

Rose Calm

Ginger, spearmint and rose. Floral on top, a little fire underneath.

INGREDIENTS

4 slices	fresh ginger
1 tbsp	dried spearmint
1 tbsp	dried culinary rose petals, unsprayed
1 tsp	honey, optional

METHOD

1. Simmer the ginger in 12 oz of water for 5 minutes.
2. Pour over the spearmint and rose petals and cover.
3. Steep 8 minutes, strain and stir in honey if you like.

HEALTH BENEFITS

Rose Calm

Mood and calm

The scent of rose is traditionally used to ease tension, and the ritual of sipping something fragrant helps the body slow down.

Nausea and bloating

Ginger settles the stomach and spearmint relaxes the gut, a good pair after a heavy meal.

Menstrual comfort

Warm ginger and rose are traditional companions for cramps and the days before a period.

Skin-friendly antioxidants

Rose petals carry polyphenols, and the tea adds hydration, which shows on the skin.

Hormone balance

Small studies suggest spearmint tea may lower androgen levels. It is of interest for hormonal acne and unwanted hair growth, though research is early.

Evening-friendly

MORNING	AFTERNOON	EVENING	BEDTIME

A lovely 3 p.m. reset or after-dinner cup. If ginger gives you heartburn when you lie down, finish it at least an hour before bed.

Go gently if you have acid reflux (mint can loosen the valve that holds acid down), gallstones, or take blood thinners. Buy roses sold for eating, never florist roses.

DID YOU KNOW

Roses have been steeped and cooked in Persian, Ottoman and Indian kitchens for centuries, in teas, syrups, sweets and rice dishes.

RITUAL

Smell the cup before you drink it. Say one kind thing to yourself that you would say to a friend.



RECIPE · CAFFEINE-FREE

Bright Bitter

Dandelion, ginger and spearmint. Earthy, golden and clean.

INGREDIENTS

1 tbsp	dried dandelion leaf or roasted root
3 slices	fresh ginger
1 tbsp	dried spearmint

METHOD

1. Simmer dandelion root and ginger in 14 oz of water for 10 minutes. For leaf, 5 minutes is enough.
2. Add the spearmint off the heat and cover.
3. Steep 5 minutes and strain. Lemon softens the bitterness.

HEALTH BENEFITS

Bright Bitter

Water balance

Dandelion leaf has a long reputation as a gentle diuretic, useful for puffiness and that heavy, retained feeling.

Digestive spark

Bitter flavors prompt the body to release digestive juices, so a cup before or after lunch can help.

Liver support

Traditionally used to support the liver and bile flow. Human research is limited.

Gut-friendly fiber

The root holds inulin, a prebiotic that feeds beneficial gut bacteria.

Minerals

Dandelion leaf supplies potassium and other minerals, and ginger and spearmint round out the digestive effect.

Daytime tea

MORNING	AFTERNOON	EVENING	BEDTIME

Plan on extra bathroom trips. Drink it from mid-morning to about 3 p.m. so it never interrupts your sleep.

Go gently if you are allergic to ragweed, daisies or chrysanthemums, take water pills, lithium, or blood thinners, have gallbladder or kidney problems, or are pregnant.

DID YOU KNOW

The name comes from the French dent-de-lion, "lion's tooth," for the jagged leaves. Every part of the plant is edible.

RITUAL

Drink this one while you plan your afternoon. Choose the single task that matters most.



RECIPE · CAFFEINE-FREE

Anise Hush

Star anise and spearmint. Sweet like licorice, cool like mint.

INGREDIENTS

1 to 2	whole star anise (Chinese, Illicium verum)
1 tbsp	dried spearmint

METHOD

1. Simmer the star anise in 12 oz of water for 5 minutes.
2. Add the spearmint off the heat and cover.
3. Steep 5 minutes and strain. It needs no sweetener.

HEALTH BENEFITS

Anise Hush

Gas and bloating

Star anise and spearmint are both carminatives, herbs used for centuries to ease gas after meals.

Chest and cough comfort

A warm, aromatic steam and traditional use for coughs make this a soothing cup when you are congested.

Antimicrobial activity

Lab studies show star anise compounds act against some bacteria and fungi.

Fresh breath

The anise and mint pair works like a natural after-dinner mouth freshener.

Antioxidants

Star anise carries flavonoids and phenolic compounds, including anethole.

Evening-friendly

MORNING | AFTERNOON | **EVENING** | **BEDTIME**

A classic after-dinner cup. It is caffeine-free and not a diuretic, so it is one of the safest picks for the hour before bed.

Go gently if you are pregnant, nursing, or have an estrogen-sensitive condition, since anise compounds are mildly estrogen-like. Use only Chinese star anise sold for cooking. Japanese star anise is toxic.

DID YOU KNOW

Star anise was long the main source of shikimic acid, the starting material for the antiviral Tamiflu.

RITUAL

Set the mug down after the second sip and look away from every screen until you finish it.



RECIPE · CAFFEINE-FREE

Green Ember

Moringa leaf with ginger, spearmint and clove. Grassy, spicy and bright.

INGREDIENTS

1 tbsp	dried moringa leaf (or 1 tsp powder)
3 slices	fresh ginger
1 tbsp	dried spearmint
2	whole cloves

METHOD

1. Simmer the ginger and cloves in 12 oz of water for 5 minutes.
2. Take off the heat and add the moringa and spearmint.
3. Cover and steep 7 minutes, then strain. If using powder, whisk it in and sip without straining.

HEALTH BENEFITS

Green Ember

Nutrient density

Moringa leaf carries vitamins A, C and E, calcium and iron. Powder you drink whole delivers more than strained leaf.

Antioxidants

Quercetin and chlorogenic acid in the leaf have been studied for protecting cells from oxidative damage.

Blood sugar support

Small human studies suggest moringa leaf may help lower blood sugar after meals.

Inflammation

Moringa compounds and ginger both show anti-inflammatory activity.

Digestion and warmth

Ginger and clove warm the belly, and spearmint keeps the finish cool.

Daytime tea

MORNING | AFTERNOON | EVENING | BEDTIME

Caffeine-free, yet many drinkers report a clean, bright energy from it. That effect is anecdotal. If you are sleep-sensitive, finish it by mid-afternoon.

Go gently if you take diabetes, blood pressure or thyroid medicine, or are pregnant (check with your provider first). Moringa root and bark are unsafe in pregnancy, so use leaf only.

DID YOU KNOW

Moringa is called the drumstick tree for its long seed pods. The leaves are the part that goes into tea.

RITUAL

Drink this one standing at a window. Choose your intention for the day before you take the last sip.

NEW BLENDS BEYOND THE SIX

Six more cups to try

Each blend uses herbs that pair well with the teas above and none repeats a recipe from the list. Same method: pour water just off the boil, cover, steep, strain. Use 1 tbsp of each dried herb per 12 oz mug unless noted.



Moon Petal

Chamomile + rose + spearmint

Chamomile adds the most-studied sleep-support herb to rose's calm and spearmint's cool finish. Steep 8 minutes.

MORNING	AFTERNOON	EVENING	BEDTIME
		●	●

Evening-friendly



Sunrise Ruby

Hibiscus + moringa + ginger

A tart, bright start with vitamin C, plant nutrients and a ginger kick. Add a splash of orange juice for sweetness. Steep 8 minutes.

MORNING	AFTERNOON	EVENING	BEDTIME
●	●		

Daytime tea



After-Dinner Amber

Star anise + ginger + cinnamon

A warming digestive tea for the end of a big meal. Simmer 8 minutes, then strain. Best taken an hour or more before lying down.

MORNING	AFTERNOON	EVENING	BEDTIME
		●	●

Evening-friendly

NEW BLENDS BEYOND THE SIX

Six more cups to try



Garnet Cooler

Hibiscus + rose + spearmint, iced

Steep double strength for 10 minutes, cool, then pour over ice with lemon. A hydrating afternoon pick that works in a pitcher.

MORNING	AFTERNOON	EVENING	BEDTIME

Daytime tea



Green Calm

Moringa + lemon balm + spearmint

Lemon balm brings steady calm to moringa's brightness, a good tea for focused work without a jittery edge. Steep 7 minutes.

MORNING	AFTERNOON	EVENING	BEDTIME

Daytime tea



Bedtime Anise Rose

Star anise + rose + chamomile

Sweet, floral and deeply soothing, with no ginger to stir up reflux. One star anise, 1 tbsp rose, 1 tbsp chamomile. Steep 8 minutes.

MORNING	AFTERNOON	EVENING	BEDTIME

Evening-friendly

QUICK REFERENCE

Which cup, when

TEA	BEST TIME	KEEPS YOU UP?	WHY
Ruby Spice	Morning to mid-afternoon	Unlikely, but spices stir some people	Warming and mildly diuretic
Green Lull	Evening, bedtime	No	Calming. Keep to a few nights a week
Rose Calm	Afternoon, after dinner	No	Soothing. Watch ginger if you get reflux
Bright Bitter	Morning to 3 p.m.	Indirectly	Diuretic, so night bathroom trips
Anise Hush	After dinner, bedtime	No	Digestive and calming
Green Ember	Morning	Possibly	Many report bright energy. Stop by mid-afternoon

Before brewing, see A Note on Your Health and Safety.



NOTES

Tasting Notes



NOTES

Quiet Reflections

REFLECTIONS & SCRIPTURE

A Moment to Savor

“ Let the first sip remind you that the day can hold something good before everything is done.

“ Some days, care looks like noticing you are tired and giving yourself a place to sit.

“ Enjoyment can be as simple as staying with a good moment long enough to feel it.

“O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.”

Psalm 34:8 · KJV

“This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.”

Psalm 118:24 · KJV

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

Matthew 11:28 · KJV

REAL MOMS LIVE

About the Author

Murdis LaToya Boston, LMFT, is a family therapist with more than twenty-five years of experience, a mother of four, and the founder of Real Moms Live. She holds a master’s degree in clinical psychology from Antioch University. Her work spans inpatient psychiatric care, outpatient practice, government agencies, school districts, corporate crisis response, and professional sports wellness.

As a clinical preceptor, she trains the next generation of nurse practitioners. She has guided families, executives, and organizations through loss and change. This book is her answer to her own.



BACK COVER

The Steep Book

I turned fifty this year. And I started counting.

My grandmother lived to 62. My mom lived to 58. Premature loss does not end at the funeral. It follows you into every birthday and every doctor’s visit, whispering: *Is this my road too?*

Then I looked at my four children, and I made a choice. They deserve their mother for another forty years.

So I went back to the kitchens of the women who raised me, to the herbal traditions families have poured into cups for generations. Hibiscus. Ginger. Mint. Not a miracle, but a practice. Small enough for an ordinary Tuesday, powerful enough to say: *I am still here, and I intend to stay.*

This book is for anyone carrying a loss, and anyone ready to choose what happens next. It is hope through healing, one warm cup at a time.

Loss is part of your story. It does not get to be the ending.