



Janet Reuter

November 2020

## There is only one way to cure the November blues and that is High Tea!



November is definitely not my favorite month of the year. In fact I always dread it coming around and the feeling that the days are shorter and nights are longer. So, there is only one thing to do and that is to plan a cosy afternoon, in front of a blazing fire, warm socks and enjoy a **high tea**. The drinking of tea in Britain not only became a social event for the upper classes, it altered the time and manner in which they took tea. Afternoon tea became the bridge between meals because many wouldn't eat their evening meal until maybe **8pm**. As such, afternoon tea became a 'mini meal' in itself, offering small, delicate sandwiches, scones and sweet cakes.

This was all well and good for the upper classes, but the working classes ran to a different schedule and a different budget. Tea was still quite expensive at the time and the working classes could not afford to waste it on anything other than necessities. A wearied factory worker wouldn't arrive home until six in the evening, and when he did, he was famished!

Therefore, in the industrial areas of the UK, especially in northern England and southern Scotland, the working classes evening meal evolved into a high tea. There was no time left for another meal before going to bed.

**English High Tea** usually involved a mug of tea, bread, vegetables, cheese and occasionally meat. Variations on high tea could include the addition of pies, potatoes and crackers.

So while Afternoon Tea was largely a social event for their upper class counterparts, high tea was a necessary meal in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This traditional high tea still exists in Britain. It is more varied, appetising and can be very delicious in the colder months when warm food is served. There are also many types of tea to drink to warm you up and help you to relax.

Why is it called '**high tea**'? A possible explanation why this type of meal was called high tea is the fact that it was eaten at a table. In comparison, Afternoon Tea was taken whilst seating on low, comfortable chairs or sofas. Of course, soon after, the upper classes developed their own variation and also called it 'high tea'. It was a meal that could be eaten when their servants were away or not available, as it was so easy to prepare. The upper class 'high tea' involved the amalgamation of afternoon tea and high tea, with the addition of pigeon, veal, salmon and fruit.

It is important to add that the afternoon tea menu served in the UK today is often referred to as high tea in many other parts of the world. Because of this some hotels, such as **The Ritz** in London, use the term '**High Tea**' to advertise their '**Afternoon Tea**' because of visitors from the USA or the old colonies.



Some venues do serve a special High Tea menu. In addition to Afternoon Tea, which includes additional savoury items such as Welsh Rarebit, English muffins, pies or omelette.



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### November (continued)

The most important part the ritual of having high tea at home during my childhood was the blazing open fire. All homes were heated by coal and wood. Although this was not very convenient to organize in a normal family without the domestic staff of **Downton Abbey**, it meant that the family all sat closely around a table together, to eat something good and talk about the past day and make plans for the next day.

Also everyone in the family had their own **toasting forks**, because one of the great delights of this meal was the **toasties**! Although you could do your toasties in the kitchen on a cooker, doing them over an open fire was so much better. The smell was fantastic and of course there was the suspense of wondering if your offering was going to fall into the fire or at worst catch fire! The amazing thing was that the simplest things always tasted so good. At this time of year it was always fun to collect edible chestnuts and roast them over the fire.

Our family favourites were toasted **crumpets**, **toasted tea cakes**, at Easter **toasted hot cross buns** all dripping with hot butter and of course **Welsh rarebit**. As we lived in Wales we always called this **Welsh rabbit**! This could only be made in the kitchen when your cooker had a grill element. These were all easy, feel good things to eat which also filled you up nicely.

You can, of course, make some delicious additions on special days. Sandwiches have always been a great part of a high tea menu. Cheddar cheese with cranberry and apple chutney, Wensleydale or Stilton cheese with walnut and raisin chutney and not to forget our beloved tuna with dried tomatoes and tomato pesto in Winter . The list is endless.

So how do you make these '**high tea**', **highlights**. The most difficult to make is **crumpets** or **pikelets** as they are also called. They can of course be bought at any good food store such as Marks' and Spencer's food Hall.

### Crumpets or Pikelets

#### Ingredients

2½ tsp Dried yeast

A little warm milk

2 tbsp unsalted butter, melted

2 tsp sea salt

2 tsp caster or fine sugar

470g plain flour

½ tsp baking powder dissolved in 60ml warm water

vegetable oil, to grease

butter or cheese, to serve



Stir together the yeast and 240ml warm water in a bowl and let it stand for 5-10 mins. Add the warm milk, butter, salt and sugar. Add the flour and stir until the batter becomes smooth. Let stand for 30 mins.

Stir in the baking powder dissolved in water, leave to rise for 20-30 mins.

Grease a heavy-based frying pan with a little vegetable oil and heat over medium to low heat. Lightly grease 4 x 9cm diameter crumpet rings and place them in the pan. Spoon batter into the rings so it comes halfway up the sides to give the crumpets space to rise. Reduce heat to low. Cook until the tops look dry, about 10-12 mins.

Flip them over and cook for 5 mins until golden and firm. Repeat with the remaining batter. Serve toasted with butter or with cheese melted under the grill. Not low calorie but very tasty!

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### High Tea (continued)

#### Tea Cakes

#### Ingredients

100ml milk, 100ml cold water

30g butter

350g strong white flour

7g sachet dried yeast

2 tbsp sugar

½ tsp mixed spice

75g mixed dried fruit (lemon/orange peel, sultanas, raisins and currants)

oil for greasing

1 egg beaten

#### **Method**

Warm the milk with the butter in a pan until the butter has melted, then add 100ml water to cool the mixture to room temperature. Tip the flour, yeast, sugar, spice and 1 tsp salt into a bowl, making sure the yeast is on the other side of the bowl to the salt. Make a well in the flour mixture and pour the milk and butter in, mixing until it forms big flakes, then bring together with your hands. Tip on a surface and knead until smooth (about 5 mins). Put the dough into a large, lightly oiled bowl, cover with a damp tea towel and leave until doubled in size, for about 1-1 ½ hours.

Line a tray with baking paper. Tip the mixed dried fruits into the dough and knead them in, trying to disperse them evenly throughout the dough. Cut your dough into 6 even-sized balls, take each ball and, using the cup of your hand, and pressing down a little with your palm make a neat round shape. Place onto a tray about 5cm away from each other and press down with your palm to flatten the dough down a little, creating the teacake shape. Cover loosely with an oiled sheet of cling film, for a further 45 mins, or until they have doubled in size.

Meanwhile, heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas mark 6. Brush the top of each bun liberally with the egg wash, then bake for 20 mins on the top shelf of the oven, until the buns are golden and well risen. Allow to cool on a wire rack, then slice in half, toast and cover generously with butter.

You have to put in lots of raisins for my grand daughter Lily. She calls them "Kinder Brötchen".

Although **chutney** is always a popular addition to any selection of sandwiches in Winter, some people prefer to have pickled onions served with a strong cheddar cheese. These are special small onions called **shallots** which are pickled in a malt or vine vinegar into which mixed spices or a clear honey is added. The onions are peeled, covered with salt and left over night in a saucepan. The next day the vinegar and honey are added and the onions are gently heated up but not to boiling point. They are then put into clean, sterilised jars and sealed. After one month they are ready to be eaten. You can choose your own spices to add into the jar.



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### News for and about the English ladies

#### I do not want to get too nostalgic but two of my early years' favourite singers have anniversaries.

##### The first is Cliff Richard.

It is hard to believe but the ever youthful pop star of the 50's and 60's Cliff Richard has made it to **80!**

**Cliff Richard**, in full **Sir Cliff Richard**, original name **Harry Roger Webb**, was born in British India in **1940**. His first hit "**Move It**" in **1958** was the first great British rock-and-roll song. I was still too young at this time but my big brother was mad about this new music style called **skiffle**. Later I queued for hours outside the Odeon Cinema in my town with my two girlfriends, still dressed in our school uniforms, to see **The young Ones** and **Summer Holiday**. They were very American in style and showed `teens´ having a great time without any parental control! A very new idea! Cliff Richard was knighted in **1995** and I believe he was the first ever pop star to get this award from the Queen.



##### The second is John Lennon



John Lennon was also born in **1940** in Liverpool and was murdered so tragically in New York in **1980**. So he would also have been **80** years old like Cliff Richard. His start in music came also with the **skiffle** bands of the 1950`s. My real love for John Lennon started when he had already left the **Beatles** and was writing his own music. I never met him but I worked with two people who knew him well. One had studied fine arts with him in Liverpool and shared canvasses as they were too poor to buy their own.

The other had studied and shared a flat with Yoko Ono when they were students at Goldsmiths School of Fine Arts in London. I am sure that you know enough about John Lennon so I don't have to write any more about him. I would however like to end with the text of my favourite song **Imagine** that he wrote in **1971**. I think the text and the music are beautiful, are perfect, and give us hope to cope with the crisis we find ourselves in today.

#### **Imagine**

Imagine there's no heaven  
It's easy if you try  
No hell below us  
Above us only sky  
Imagine all the people  
Living for today  
Imagine there's no countries  
It isn't hard to do  
Nothing to die or kill for  
And no religion too

Imagine all the people  
Living life in peace  
Imagine no possessions  
I wonder if you can  
No need for greed or hunger  
A brotherhood of man  
Imagine all the people  
Sharing all the world  
You may say I'm a dreamer  
But I'm not the only one

I hope someday you'll join us  
And the world will be as one

If you feel like a visit to the cinema again there is a highly praised new film which may be in a cinema near you. **The Forgotten Garden** is a 2008 novel written by Australian author **Kate Morton**, driven by the mystery of why a 4-year-old child is found abandoned on an Australian wharf in 1913. The film themes are abandoned children, Australia, country homes, England, Cornwall, inheritance and succession. Wonderful photography especially of the real Lost Garden of Heligan in Cornwall.

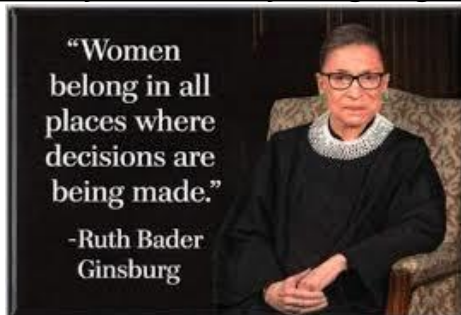


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## News for and about the English ladies

### Ruth Bader Ginsburg 1933 to 2020.

#### A most remarkable lady in the history of legal rights for women in the USA.



The most important feminist lawyer in the history of the American republic has died. Ruth Bader Ginsburg, a supreme court justice and singularly influential legal mind, was appointed by Bill Clinton in **1993**, the court's second ever female justice, and served for nearly 30 years. She passed away last month at the age of **87**.

As a young woman she was determined to study law and work as a lawyer. However, she was patronised at Harvard Law School by male professors full of their own importance and not willing to support a woman, especially not one who was married and had a small child. The dean finds a way to prove that a woman has not the same rights that male students in similar circumstances have which allowed the men to graduate from that university. Unable to take a Harvard degree, due to these family pressures she finally left Harvard to qualify at Columbia Law School.

In New York, finding a job as a practising lawyer was almost impossible. "A woman and a mother and a Jew to boot!" So Ruth must content herself at first with an academic position, and searches for the key cases that will take on male privilege and sex discrimination. Many times, Ginsburg lost a job due to her sex. These kinds of sexist rejections were not only common, they were completely legal. That they are not legal anymore is due largely to Ginsburg's own work. Through a series of strategic and brilliantly argued cases that she brought before the courts as a lawyer, she dragged the law into recognizing women's rights by the sheer force of her intellect and will.

Now Ruth Bader Ginsburg has passed away. But there is reason to believe that the dream of women's equality under the law will not die with her. She is survived by her daughter, Jill, herself a law professor, and by the generation of female law students and clerks whom she mentored, younger legal minds who will carry on her legacy. She is survived, too, by the women whose lives and careers she made possible through her legal work. When Ginsburg's mother, Celia Bader, died in 1950, she had lived an unfairly constrained life that did not match her capabilities. She did not dream that her daughter would achieve the heights that she did, influencing the course of American law and opening new opportunities for generations of American women. In interviews, Ginsburg spoke of her family's ascent as typical of the American dream. There was only one generation between the mother, the factory worker, and the daughter, the supreme court justice. This was always the hope of America, that this sort of ascent would be possible. Ginsburg made it possible for women to achieve their own rights, by the sheer force of her intellect and will.

**"Fight for the things that you care about, but do it in a way that will lead others to join you".**

### Rebecca

#### This is a new and modern interpretation of the classic thriller novel by Daphne du Maurier

The first Oscar winning film directed in **1940** by **Alfred Hitchcock** was a sensation. Will this version also do the same? Mrs. De Winter is played by Lily James of Downtown Abbey fame. And the dreaded Mrs Danvers by Kristen Scott Thomas. A young newlywed arrives at her husband's imposing family estate Manderley on the windswept Cornish coast and finds herself battling the shadow of her husband' first wife, Rebecca, whose legacy lives on in the house long after her death. Wonderful photography and Manderley is a combination of six stately houses. Only available on Netflix at the moment.