

## AFTERNOON TEA TEXT

Afternoon tea, that most quintessential of English customs is, perhaps surprisingly, a relatively new tradition. Whilst the custom of drinking tea dates back to the third millennium BC in China and was popularised in England during the 1660s by King Charles II, it was not until the mid 19th century that the concept of 'afternoon tea' first appeared.

Afternoon tea was introduced in England by Anna, the seventh Duchess of Bedford, in the year 1840.

At around four o'clock in the afternoon, the Duchess would request a tray of tea, bread and butter (some time earlier, the Earl of Sandwich had had the idea of putting a filling between two slices of bread) and cake be brought to her room.

This pause for tea became a fashionable social event. During the 1880's upper-class and society women would change into long gowns, gloves and hats for their afternoon tea which was usually served in the drawing room between four and five o'clock.

Traditional afternoon tea consists of a selection of dainty sandwiches (including, of course, thinly sliced cucumber sandwiches), scones served with clotted cream and preserves. Cakes and pastries are also served. Tea grown in India or Ceylon is poured from silver teapots into delicate bone china cups.