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Expand your U.K. IQ: **Appetizing tea**

By [Charlie Reed](#), Stars and Stripes

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Order a cream tea in Britain, and you'll get more than just a cup of PG Tips or Twinings with a dash of dairy. A cream tea comes with not only the nation's signature beverage, but also with scones, jam and clotted cream. It's a sugary nibble between meals.

In fact, hot tea with cream is a big no-no, said tea expert Lisa Boalt Richardson.

"You never put cream in your tea. It's hotter than coffee, and especially with black tea that's popular in England, the high fat content will make the cream curdle," said Richardson, who has written several books on tea and is the president of the Southern Association of Tea Businesses outside Atlanta.

For those new to the tea scene, there are four essential ingredients of a cream tea.

The tea is at the center of it all. The standard in the U.K. is usually of the black variety. It's a stronger brew made from fully fermented leaves, as opposed to its weaker U.S. counterpart.

Then there are the scones, which usually come in pairs with a cream tea. A scone is a slightly sweet, biscuitlike quick bread not to be confused with the British biscuit, or what Americans call a cookie.

Next come the clotted cream and the jam, which are spread over the halved scones, however, sometimes not necessarily in that order.

Clotted cream is somewhere between butter and whipped cream. It's made by heating milk and allowing it to cool for a period, after which it "clots" into a thick, lumpy concoction. It's what makes a cream tea slightly decadent. On top of that, a smear of jam is applied.

Cream tea originated near Devon and Cornwall, in southwest England, but is served throughout the country. Most trendy tearooms in the States call it afternoon tea.

Like much of the traditional fare here, cream tea is not exactly for those counting calories. But if you want to indulge in one of Britain's classic snacks, the cream tea is calling.

Got a question about something you've seen or heard around the United Kingdom? E-mail us at: uknews@estripes.osd.mil

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