

Chapter 37

Beverages

Beverages and Traditions

Directions: Read the following selection. Then answer the questions under *Thinking Critically*, and complete the activities as directed by your teacher.

Many beverages have been part of world cultures for centuries. This selection provides an example of a Japanese custom.

The Japanese Tea Ceremony

The Japanese have enjoyed tea on a daily basis since the Chinese introduced it to them long ago in the eighth century. This beverage is also the centerpiece of an elegant ritual called *cha-no-yu*, known in the West as the Japanese tea ceremony.

The roots of the tea ceremony in Japanese culture go back almost a thousand years. Buddhist philosophers believed that tea's soothing qualities relaxed and focused the mind, allowing one to appreciate art and meditate on religion. Based upon these beliefs, they developed a special ceremony for serving and sharing tea in which every element is rich in significance.

Elaborate Simplicity

Ideally, the ceremony takes place in a specially constructed teahouse, which sits in a quiet setting of natural beauty. This is in keeping with the Japanese culture's love for the harmony and simplicity of nature.

Before entering the teahouse, guests and hosts remove their shoes and exchange bows. They must bend to enter the small, square doorway, promoting a sense of humility and equality.

The host brings out the utensils and prepares the tea before the guests. This ritual—indeed, the entire ceremony—is marked by precise actions. With ballet-like grace, the host places powdered green tea in a bowl, adds a dipperful of hot water, and stirs the mixture with a utensil called a *chasen*—a small bamboo whisk that is handmade from a single piece of bamboo—which he whirls between the palms of his hands.

The tea is then served in small bowls without handles. Sweet cakes may be offered as well.



Guests, too, follow etiquette of exact, flowing movements. The bowl of tea is held in a specific way and given a half-turn after a drink is taken. To eat a piece of teacake, the host sets down the bowl of sweets, turning it halfway, bows to it, picks up the chopsticks with his left hand, transfers them to his right, lifts a bite of cake to his mouth, returns the chopsticks to his left hand, and places them parallel on the bowl's rim—all with ease and grace.

An Enduring Tradition

With so many rules, it's no surprise that one needs formal instruction to participate in a ceremony properly. Classes on *cha-no-yu* are taught by tea masters, who are greatly respected for their knowledge and skills. It is said that it takes three months to learn to eat cake correctly, a year to learn the art of drinking tea, and several years before one is ready to host a formal tea ceremony.

Why has the ceremony survived for so many centuries? Tradition is only part of the answer. To those who appreciate *cha-no-yu*, it is more than a custom; it is an art. The simple beauty of the tea ceremony and the tranquility of mind that it brings are valued by those who practice this enduring tradition.

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Thinking Critically

1. Why is water considered to be the best beverage choice for athletes?

2. A portion of most beverages is 8 fluid ounces. A 20-ounce bottle of cola contains 100 calories per serving. How many servings does this make? How many calories would you consume if you drank the 20 ounces of cola?

3. What types of beverages provide the best nutrition for the busiest activity schedule? Explain your answer.

For Further Study

- ◆ What quenches your thirst? Make a list of all the beverages that really quench your thirst. Compare the nutritional value of a serving of each beverage. Log your beverage intake for three days. Graph your nutrition for each day. Are all your beverages good choices? How could you improve your choices? Summarize the information from your graph and submit the summary and the graph to your teacher.
- ◆ Did you know that dehydration is a problem linked to poor learning and shortened attention span? Did you know that students need water to be at their best? Research the importance of water in your diet. Focus on athletes' need for water, water and the brain, or water and overall health. Share your information on several PowerPoint® slides with the class or with your sports team.
- ◆ A creative breakfast beverage may be made from one scoop of vanilla ice cream in a tall glass and $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of cranberry juice. Investigate the benefits of cranberries and the total nutritional benefits of this beverage. Suggest several creative adaptations to this basic recipe. Collate your information and recipes in a tri-fold brochure to share with your friends.
- ◆ Make an exhibit displaying facts about several beverages. Include a collection of ads from magazines, newspapers, articles, brochures from beverage manufacturers, and labels. Display your exhibit in the classroom, a school display case, or in the cafeteria. Summarize what you learned from this exhibit. For example, what type of information has the biggest impact on your choice of beverage? Why? What information do you find confusing?