

*(photo courtesy of Village Tea Co.)*

*Funny how things work. An ooold friend of mine found me on Facebook and was totally shocked I was cooking. I think he'd known of my passion for it 12 years ago, but it was news to him. And exciting news. He looves to eat. But more importantly, he's loves to broker deals! Help his friends, really.*

*A few months ago he introduced me to Village Tea Company, a Dallas, TX based loose leaf tea business. Currently, they are online and sell at Whole Foods in Texas, but will be opening a tea house in just 10 days. My friend spoke highly of them and said he thought we could work together. I'm thinking **"What? Tea? Yeah, not so much. I'm all about the café con leche and tea does not cut it, papi."***

But I like to consider myself a well-rounded individual that thinks outside the box. So, I said I'd give a shot and see what it was all about. Don't get me wrong now. I like tea. I love green tea. I really like roobois. I just don't think of it as my go-to drink option for morning or after dinner gulps. But, I gave them a buzz, quizzed the owner like a high schooler prepping for the SAT, inquired about his tea source and finally asked why it's better than coffee.

### **My Cuban coffee.**

He didn't have an answer to the last question, and I really didn't expect him to, but I was completely satisfied with his business concept and goals. The name **Village** was adopted for a very simple reason: they want to offer their customers a relaxed family-like atmosphere; because at the end of the day, it takes a village to make something grow. Kind of a cliché, but true. They expect their customers to be relaxed and not high- strung, while keeping their food and drink intake a priority in their healthy diets. The owner himself boasts *"our classic white is not only incredibly smooth tea, but with its high anti-oxidant level, I've been feeling healthier and kept the flu away."*

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So we get that **VTC** is about offering balance and healthy alternatives in a relaxed and cozy, familiar ambiance. Check. But let's talk about the teas! Oh my goodness! "They" say don't judge a book by its cover, but I did. I fell for the clean, white, crisp looking canisters with spring and summer colors that make it appealing. They have 10 flavors made from white, green and black teas and some organic options, too. All canisters come with reusable, non-bleach filter bags, making them eco-friendly. They even have random tea and lifestyle facts and quotes on the back. Open a canister and you will be punched with the strong and very natural aromas of the leaves. Of the 10 flavors, my faves are the **Duo Oolong Ginger-Orange blend**, **Gentle Organic Lemon Ginger Green** tea and the **Royal English Black Tea** blend which has an amazing bite to it. I had this one,

while hastily working one late night in NY while prepping for the Robuchon meeting, and it did the job!

Though you all know I'm a coffee fiend, this loose leaf brand is my new thing in drinks at home. I had so much fun playing around with their products, I had to incorporate them in a few of my live cooking segments on "**Daytime**". The first segment cooking demo below, is a duo coffee and tea segment, where I talk about morning beverage options and then show you how to take both *café* and tea into your evening soirees. I swear I did not intoxicate host Dave with all that alcohol! He drank at his very own risk. And so did the rest of the crew!

Oh, and for the loose leaf in his teeth, I think he'll take my advice next time. That, or I'll have to bring some serious kitchen assistance to make sure everything is steeped, drained and properly set up. There is so much involved in making a 5 min. TV stint go smoothly. Geesh!

[Get the Flash Player](#) to see the wordTube Media Player.

I also did an orange-ginger flan using their tea, which my friends say, was amazing!! I suggest you try it out! That segment will run sometime in November so I'll make sure to post it here when it does.

Here's a basic, but super refreshing tea you can make with **VTC** tea:

**ICED LEMON GINGER GREEN TEA**

- 1 cup water
- 1 tsp. loose tea
- lemon wedge
- ice

If you have a martini strainer and want iced tea, boil water in tea pot. Measure out 1 flat teaspoon of tea per 8 oz serving or 1 teaspoon per cup of tea. The more tea the more punch. Put the loose leaf into the serving flask and pour hot water into the flask up to a half way point. Let it steep the appropriate 3 minutes. Add ice all the way to the top of the flask and serve. Pour through martini strainer for Instant loose leaf iced tea. You may sweeten this tea with Stevia or white sugar.

## **TEA CONTEST & GIVEAWAY!**

So because I love **VTC** so much, I'm giving some away!! **I'll send 3 canisters of a random selection of teas to one lucky person!** All you have to do is leave a comment and tell me how you use tea in our food! If you're on Twitter, tweet it including my name @brenherrera, and earn an extra entry! A random person will be selected on Nov. 10th, so you have until midnight Nov. 9th to enter your comments!

Whatchu waitin' for?! You know you want some tea.

*PS: please support One Comment. One Eats., my Hunger Lives No More Campaign, by visiting the last post and leaving a comment! It's a great post, too?me and Joel Robuchon chat and cook it up in his NY restaurant! Thanks a bunch. You make me so proud!*