

TEA PARTY

BY ROBIN SCHEMP

Tea is a most versatile cocktail companion, and this cobbler proves it. Traditionally, the cobbler (circa 1930s) took advantage of two new inventions: ice (preferably crushed) and straws. Typically, it was a lower-spirited drink for sipping, made with sherry or another fortified wine, sugar and fresh berries or other fruit. This pear-focused version takes advantage of the use of tea dilution so that a stronger spirit can be used—and the alterations are endless.

- ▶ The base fruit here is juicy pears (Bartlett variety would work well) but brambly berries are classic. Other tree fruits could easily be used, while pineapple also makes for a delicious option.
- ▶ The tea can be changed based on the desired profile. A black tea will add more robust color and tannin, a jasmine tea can contribute floral notes, while white tea will lend delicacy. Chai—a wonderful aromatic teasan—might give more punch. The key is to brew it strongly and chill it in advance.
- ▶ The nectar is not necessary, but with the crushed ice it adds a nice viscosity. One could omit it and use more juicy fruit or just add more tea.
- ▶ The liqueur could be replaced with a smaller amount of simple syrup or any other flavored sweet or off-sweet spirit or even bitters. Elderflower is an obvious match, but experiment with different spirits for flavor alterations.



PEARTEA COBBLER

2 Tbsp. ripe pears, cubed
 Juice of half lemon
 Crushed ice
 3 oz. brewed white or jasmine tea, chilled
 2-3 oz. pear nectar
 2 oz. gin
 ½ oz. ginger liqueur
 Pear slice

Gently toss cubed pears with lemon juice to soften slightly. Place in glass; add ice. Blend drink ingredients; stir vigorously. Pour over pears and ice. Serve with straw and pear garnish.

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