

It's a Big World... Drink it Up!



Quality Loose Leaf Teas  
and Accessories from  
Around the World.

sharing knowledge and passion for tea



#DrinkWithSmith

[www.theteasmith.com](http://www.theteasmith.com)

[wholesale@theteasmith.com](mailto:wholesale@theteasmith.com)

[listening@theteasmith.com](mailto:listening@theteasmith.com)

877.330.7033  
omaha, nebraska



# MIDWEST TEA FESTIVAL

---

*Program 2023*

*Oct. 21–22*

*Overland Park Convention Center  
Overland Park, KS*



[midwestteafest.com](http://midwestteafest.com)

SIMPSON & VAIL®

# The Holiday Tea Collection



Photo by:  
@kathleenhipps



**SIMPSON  
& VAIL®**

Quality Teas & Coffees Since 1929



[svtea.com](http://svtea.com) | [800-282-TEAS](tel:800-282-TEAS) | [info@svtea.com](mailto:info@svtea.com)

Shop Holiday  
Teas Now!



## Dr. Sally Wei

*Hello and welcome to the Midwest Tea Festival!*

*The Midwest Tea Festival is a celebration of all thing's tea! You will have the opportunity to sample teas from around the world, learn from tea experts and educators, and connect with fellow tea lovers.*

*Whether you are a beginner or a connoisseur, you will find something to enjoy and discover that will create warm memories!*

*Cheers!*

*Sally*

---

Sally Wei is an accomplished classical pianist and holds a Doctorate in Musical Arts. As musicians strive for perfection, Sally found equal passions in her enjoyment of tea and is a Certified Tea Sommelier.

Trained in Taiwan and England, Sally embraces these two tea cultures through the philosophy of "Jing Si" (Still Thoughts) in the understanding, preparation and enjoyment of the blessings of Tea.

Sally Wei is an acclaimed speaker and instructor at Tea Events and Festivals throughout N. America and Asia.

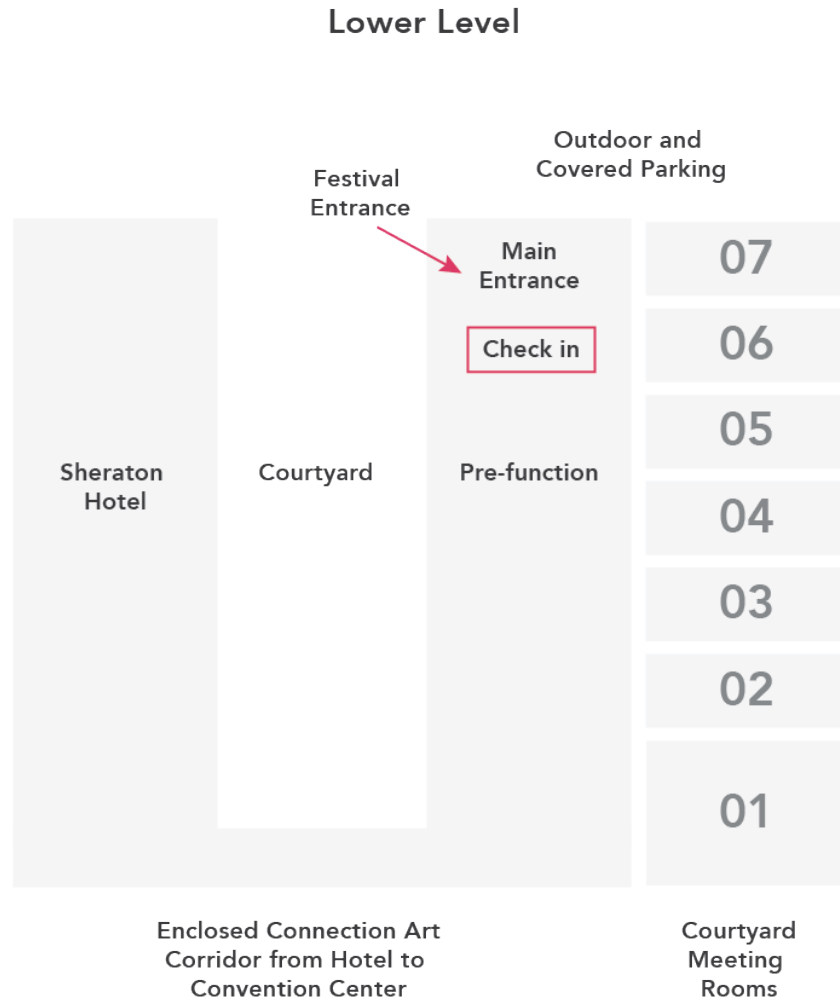
# Saturday, Oct. 21st

	Tea Business Seminar	Tea Classes	Tea Lounge	Tea Movies
8	Open Registration Meet & Greet—Tea Tasting			
9	<b>8:30 am</b> Hobby to Business			
10	<b>9:45 am</b> Sharing Your Passion For Tea			
11				
12	<b>11:15 am</b> Getting & Keeping Loyal Customers			Jane Austen Movie #1 <b>Emma</b>
1	<b>12:30 pm</b> Break For Lunch And Festival Fun	The Benefits Of Harboring A Positive Tea Community & How To Help The Tea Community Grow	Nepal Tea Collective / ISTea / Jing Si Tea	
2		The Simplicity of Reading Tea Leaves: A Fun How-To Class	Single Origin Teas / Australian Tea / Nepal Tea Collective	Jane Austen Movie #2 <b>Pride and Prejudice</b>
3		Immersive Tea Tourism	Harney & Sons / Sugimoto Tea / Mrs. Little	
4		Tea Cultivation in The Era Of Climate Change	Nepal Tea Collective / Chicago Tea House / ISTea	Jane Austen Movie #2 <b>Sense and Sensibility</b>
5	<b>4:15 pm</b> Q&A From the Day + Optional Pitch Sessions (By Lottery*)	Smart Brewing 4.0	Liliku Tea / Jing Si Tea / Australian Tea	
6				
02	<b>6:00 pm</b> Jane Austen Networking Party			

# Sunday, Oct. 22nd

	Tea Business Seminar	Tea Classes	Tea Lounge	Tea Movies
8	Meet & Greet — “Who Are Specialty Tea Influencers” Exercise—Tea Tasting			
9	The 10 Most Important Things You Need To Know Before Opening A Tea Shop			
10				
11				
12	<b>11:30 am</b> Social Media & Content Creation	Musicali—Tea: Taiwanese Oolong Tea & its Music		Tea Lovers’ Favorite #1 <b>Princess Diaries</b>
1	<b>12:30 pm</b> Break for lunch and festival fun	Japanese Tea Varieties	Nepal Tea Collective / Chicago Tea House / ISTea	
2		Tips for Finding Your Favorite Japanese Teas and Brewing Methods	Nepal Tea Collective / Chicago Tea House / Singel Origin Teas	Tea Lovers’ Favorite #2 <b>The Importance of Being Earnest</b>
3		Tea vs. Tisanes: Discover The Beauty Of Mother Nature	Sugimoto Tea / Mrs. Little / Liliku Tea	
4	Meet The Farmers Panel	Tea Cocktails and Mocktails		Children’s Favorite <b>Alice in Wonderland</b>
5	Final Q&A			
6				
04				

# Overland Park Convention Center



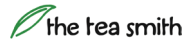
## Saturday, Oct.21st

8:00 am–6:00 pm	Business Seminar	ROOM 4
11:00 am–5:00 pm	Exhibit Hall	ROOM 1–3
11:00 am–5:00 pm	Tea Movies	ROOM 6
11:00 am–4:00 pm	Tea Classes	ROOM 7
12:00 pm–4:00 pm	Tea Lounge	ROOM 5
6:00 pm–8:00 pm	Jane Austen Networking Party	ROOM 6

## Sunday, Oct.22rd

8:00 am–5:00 pm	Business Seminar	ROOM 4
11:00 am–5:00 pm	Exhibit Hall	ROOM 1–3
11:00 am–5:00 pm	Tea Movies	ROOM 6
11:00 am–4:00 pm	Tea Classes	ROOM 7
12:00 pm–4:00 pm	Tea Lounge	ROOM 5

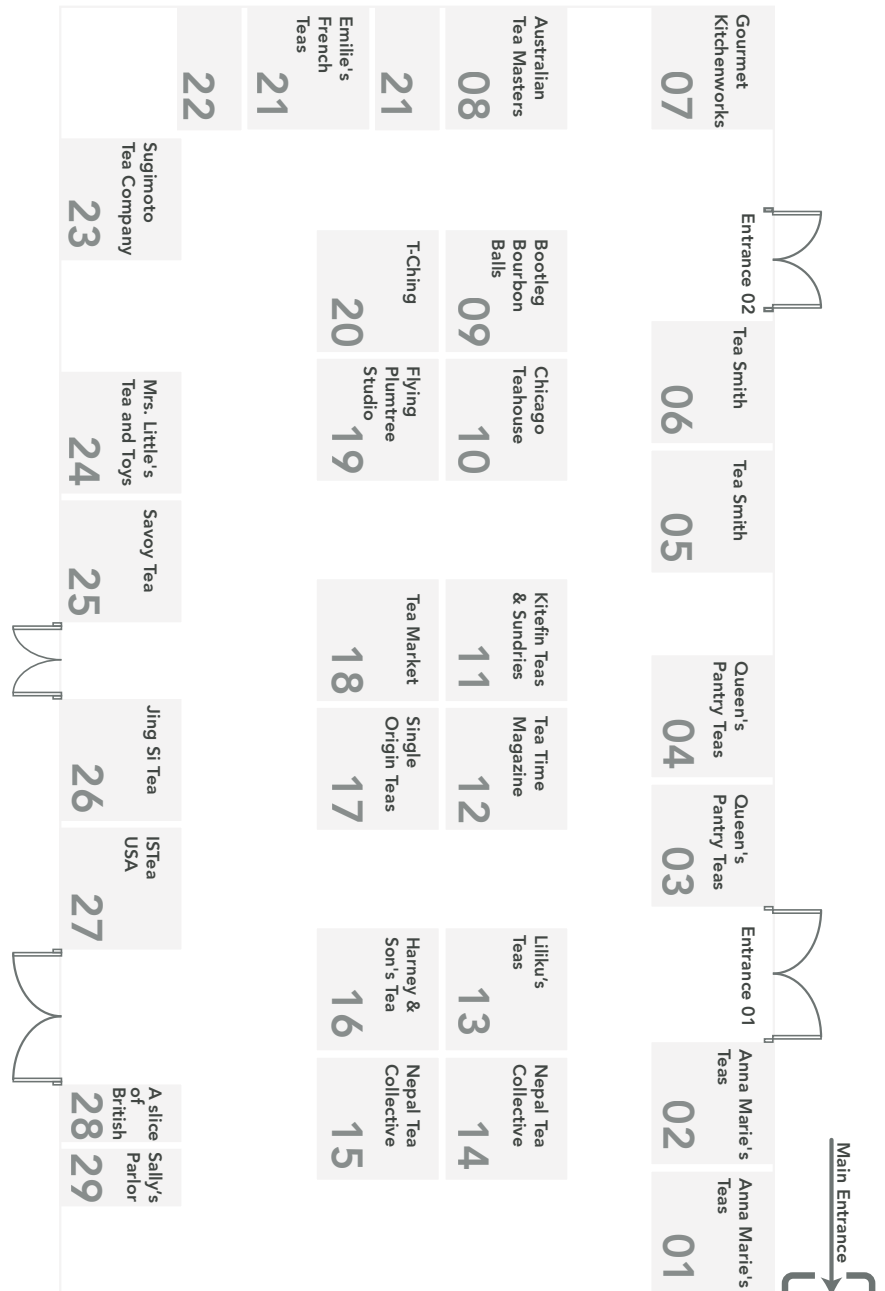
# Vendors



Gourmet  
Kitchen-  
works



Flying  
Plumtree  
Studio



## Presenters

# Cody Wade

Cody Wade is a tea personality and educator, who is also known as 'The Oolong Drunk'. He is a regular contributor for World Tea News, as well as running a blog and tea-talk show. He's also spoken at World Tea Expo 2022 & 2023, as well as the Houston Tea Expo. Cody's passion is sharing and spreading the love and joy of tea through education and entertainment.



# Jenni-Lyn Williams

CEO and Founder of Snarky Tea, Jenni-Lyn made a national name for herself when bringing her brand to Shark Tank. She run a successful business that sells a wide-variety of tea and tea ware, with a snarky twist.





# Elizabeth Little

Elizabeth Little is the creator of Mrs. Little's Tea and Toys, a whimsical tea house in Hamilton, Missouri. Even when Mrs. Little was teaching mathematics, she found that her students could always do better in class if she served tea. Now Mrs. Little combines her passion for teaching and tea with her long-time practice of reading tea leaves. Her classes are fun and accessible to everyone at any level. She provides online and in-person classes, tea-leaf reading sets, and personal readings. Her forthcoming book, "From Tea to Truth, Recipes for Life by Mrs. Little," will be available October 26th, 2023.

# Nishchal Banskota

Nishchal Banskota is a 2nd generation tea producer and the founder of Nepal Tea which directly brings organic teas from Nepal to the American market while empowering smallholder farmers in the process. He is primarily concerned about the role of the sustainable investment market. His vision is to create a tech-enabled transparent tea trade that bridges the gap between the primary producers and consumers. He is an active member of the European Specialty Tea Association (ESTA) working to define, educate and execute direct trade through the International Development Committee. His innovative work has been featured in major publications like the New York Times and Forbes and he has been a regular speaker at various tea festivals. He is a young leader for the European Union Development Days and an active advocate for the UN Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda.





# James Orrock



James Orrock runs Single Origin Teas. His company focuses on importing teas from small unique tea estates that focus on the unique flavors of tea grown around the world. James obtained his PhD in Plant Pathology researching tea cultivation in Florida.

# Noli Ergas

Noli never really “got into” tea; it just grew on him. While living in Japan, he became accustomed to the standard daily teas (sencha, genmaicha, mugicha, etc.) as well as the traditional tea of Japanese tea ceremony (matcha). Daily habit grew into interest which grew into passion. Now, he is one of the few outside of Japan certified as a Japanese Tea Advisor by the Japanese Tea Instructor Association.



# Akiko One

Akiko Ono—Owner of LILIKU TEA, Certified Japanese Tea Instructor Born in Tokyo, Japan, Akiko established her own company in 2015 after working at a global e-commerce company. She has been involved in many projects to help small and medium-sized Japanese companies enter the global marketplace and has had many chances to work with tea farmers in various regions in Japan. It was there that Akiko realized the unlimited potential of Japanese tea and became obsessed with its diverse world that displays a variety of faces depending on the region, cultivar, and producer. Akiko has decided to deepen her roots in the tea industry and is working closely with tea farms and masters across Japan to deliver delicious tea to tea lovers around the world.



# Emilie Jackson

Originally from France, Emilie Jackson speaks English, Spanish and French fluently. Before settling in the United States, Emilie lived in France, Portugal, England and Mexico where ancient healing traditions are still alive. After working in International Business and Marketing for over 15 years, Emilie decided to pursue her dream of entrepreneurship. In 2017 she co-founded Centered Spirit: A Cultural and Holistic Center and Emilie's French Teas. Emilie has a passion for cultures and traditions from around the world - especially tea rituals. Visitors to the French Tea Room quickly find out that her enthusiasm for the Art of Tea is contagious. Emilie loves sharing her passion for tea so please don't hesitate to stop by and ask her about tea, wellness classes and private tea parties.



## Smart Brewing 4.0

Intelligent tea maker brews exquisite tea  
with a single click  
in just 10 seconds



### ISTea Tea Brewing Machine

The Perfect Solution for Healthy Hydration

- Rapid Heating
- Intelligent Identify
- Quantitative Select & Control
- Intelligent Tea Making
- Automatic Water Replenishment
- Online Upgrade



## ISTea Capsules Premium whole-leaf tea sourced from ZHENG SHAN TANG

### *The origin of black tea, the founder of Jin Jun Mei tea*

In the middle and late Ming Dynasty (1568), the ancestor of ZHENG SHAN TANG, Mr. Jiang, created black tea, and ZHENG SHAN Lapsang Souchong is recognized as the originator of black tea in the world. Mr. Jiang Yuanxun, the founder of ZHENG SHAN TANG, is the inheritor of ZHENG SHAN Lapsang Souchong, and the inventor of premium black tea Jin Jun Mei.

### *Core Jun Mei original craftsmanship Ten golden ecological production areas*

With reference to the excellent ecological environment of Tongmuguan in Wuyi Mountain, carefully selected ten major ecological production areas nationwide have been established as standardized bases, achieving large-scale and sustainable supply of high-quality tea, and establishing the first set of Jun Mei craftsmanship and blending standards.

### *International Acknowledgement*

ZHENG SHAN TANG is the champion of the World Tea Industry Gold Award, the recipient of the Special Gold Award at the China International Tea Industry Expo, and the winner of the Gold Award in the Red Tea category at the Shanghai World Expo's Fine Tea Evaluation. Moreover, in significant international events such as the 2017 BRICS Summit in Xiamen and the 44th World Heritage Committee Meeting in 2021, ZHENG SHAN TANG was the exclusive red tea cooperative brand and became a sponsor of national events multiple times, earning international acclaim and recognition around the world.





## Rebecca Grzeskowiak

Rebecca has been with The Tea Smith since 2013, coming from an artistic background and even training in stunts and stage fighting. She enjoys sharing her passion for tea with our retail and wholesale customers alike. Not only is she passionate about tea education for all, but has also worked to create many of The Tea Smith blends, offers the unique opportunity to create custom blends for wholesale customers, hosts live or virtual guided tastings and educational sessions for both retail and wholesale customers, and has spoken at the World Tea Expo, and at the Midwest Tea Festival in the past. She has a voracious appetite for knowledge, a love for plants and herbs, and enjoys culinary experimentation, and sharing knowledge and learning!

## Babette Donaldson

Babette Donaldson, founder of the International Tea Sippers Society and author of *The Everything Healthy Tea Book* and *The Emma Lea Books* began her adventure with “real” tea as a graduate art student in San Francisco during the 70’s with a focus on ceramic art. Studying the history and elegance of ancient tea ware inspired curiosity for the beverage and worldwide cultures that celebrate it ceremonially. This inspired her most recent project, “Sip for Peace” for which she earned Best Consumer-Oriented Marketing Campaign at this year’s World Tea Expo.



## Nicole Burriss



Nicole Burriss, the owner of Taste All The Tea, is a Kansas City native. She grew up with Lipton iced tea and didn't really think much about tea until her eyes were opened at an afternoon tea party. Taking a deep and obsessive dive into teas of all kinds led her to found the Midwest Tea Festival and the Chicago International Tea Festival. After several years of calling tea lovers to Kansas City to celebrate tea and tea cultures, she passed both festivals on to other organizers and started a partnership with Australian Tea Masters. She is currently the US wholesale distributor of Australian Tea Masters line of Korean teas.

## Tim Smith

Tim was first introduced to tea during a visit to Japan many years ago. From there he discovered that tea is so much more than just a beverage, and was drawn into the legends, history, flavors and people that make tea so special and such an important part of people's lives all across the globe.

Tim holds an MBA from Creighton University. He has been an active proponent of small business and entrepreneurs, having served as a Delegate to the White House Conference on Small Business and on numerous boards for industry and not-for-profit organizations. Tim has presented at numerous venues including the Midwest Tea Fest and World Tea Expo. In 2012 he was named the "Top Tea Infusionist."

Tim Smith is the Chief Leaf at The Tea Smith in Omaha, NE.

The Tea Smith operates retail shops in Omaha, NE and is a wholesaler and importer of teas and herbal infusions to fine restaurants, coffee shops, tea rooms, spas and health stores.

# Tea Business Seminar

Babette Donaldson & Nicole Burriss

---

## **Open Registratio— Meet & Greet—Tea Tasting**

---

As we gather, tea wholesalers will supply us with samples to sip and consider which teas are the best fit for your business idea. There will also be the drawing for “Elevator Pitch Lottery” later in the day.

---

8:00 am Sat. Oct.21, 2023

Tim Smith, Owner of The Tea Smith

---

## **Hobby to Business**

---

How do you develop your love of tea from a passionate hobby to a business?

---

8:30 am Sat. Oct.21, 2023

Stacie Robertson, owner of The Tea Market

---

## **Sharing Your Passion For Tea**

---

How do you talk to people who almost nothing about tea to excite and engage them without being a tea snob or overwhelming them.

---

9:45 am Sat. Oct.21, 2023

Babette Donaldson, publisher of T Ching

---

## **Getting & Keeping Loyal Customers**

---

Your customers are the foundation of your tea business. Keeping loyal customers who purchase regularly greatly reduces the workload and expense of acquiring new customers.

---

11:15 am Sat. Oct.21, 2023

## **Break for lunch and festival fun**

---

You’ll have plenty of time to browse the vendor area or to enjoy lunch with some of your new tea-biz acquaintances. But it’s a good time to jot down a few questions that you want to ask during our last Q&A session of the day.

---

12:30–3:30 pm Sat. Oct.21, 2023

## **Q&A From the Day + Optional Pitch Sessions (By Lottery\*)**

---

We’ll divide this time between your burning questions and burning desire to share the unique details of your tea business plan. The pitches will be 2-5 minute descriptions of your business. This is one of the most valuable skills you can hone for entrepreneurial success.

---

4:00–5:30 pm Sat. Oct.21, 2023

---

### **Jane Austen Party(Separate ticket required)**

Jane Austen Networking Party—Regency costumes encouraged. Jane Austen Tea, provided by the Simpson and Vail Tea Company, will be served. Refreshments can be purchased on site.

---

6:00–8:00 pm Sat. Oct.21, 2023

Babette Donaldson & Nicole Burriss

---

### **Meet & Greet—“Who Are Specialty Tea Influencers” Exercise—Tea Tasting**

As we gather, tea wholesalers will supply us with samples to sip and consider which teas are the best fit for your business idea + Tea Influencers Quiz Game with small prizes.

---

8:00 am Sun. Oct.22, 2023

Sharyn Johnson, owner of Australian Tea Masters

---

### **The 10 Most Important Things You Need To Know Before Opening A Tea Shop**

Sharyn has coached hundreds of beginners in the launch of their shops in more than ten different countries. She continues to follow and support them. In this session she will share her observations from first-hand experience.

---

9:00 am Sun. Oct.22, 2023

Alex Jackson, Co-Owner Emilie’s French Tea

---

### **Partnership Businesses; Co-Locating With Compatible Businesses**

This presentation considers some of the challenges and opportunities for two different businesses to be compatible and even beneficial to each other to share a location and community of loyal customers

---

10:00 am Sun. Oct.22, 2023

Cody Wade, blogger, “The Oolong Drunk

---

### **Social Media & Content Creation**

What makes good content for your social media? Which platforms are the most valuable investments of your time? How can you motivate employees and customers to help your social media plan?

---

11:30 am Sun. Oct.22, 2023

Akiko Ono, Nishchal Banskota,  
Shalini Agarwal, Shang, James Orrock

---

### **Meet The Farmers” Panel**

Tea farmers from different regions of the world share the challenges of producing Specialty Artisan Teas.

---

3:00 pm Sun. Oct.22, 2023

# Tea Classes

Cody Wade + Jenni-Lyn Williams

---

## **The benefits of harboring a positive tea community & how to help the tea community grow**

---

For our presentation, Jenni-Lyn and I will be talking about the correct ways to harbor a tea community that promotes the love of tea, which can generate info sustainable sales, and longevity within the tea industry. We'll be going over how you can communicate with any consumer base on the language you can use to help make consumers of tea feel accepted, and return to the world of tea. We'll also be doing a Q & A after.

---

12:00 pm Sat. Oct.21, 2023

Elizabeth Little

---

## **The Simplicity of Reading Tea Leaves: A Fun How-To Class**

---

You don't need special talent or knowledge to enjoy the simple art of reading tea leaves for a glimpse into the future! Mrs. Little will gently guide you into this fascinating ancient art. Her sense of humor and practical midwest roots make the class fun and accessible for everyone. Sip and see

---

1:00 pm Sat. Oct.21, 2023

Nishchai Banskota

---

## **Immersive tea tourism**

---

Tourism has evolved from just taking pictures and seeing things to actually immersing and experiencing the cultures, places and traditions. If you've ever wondered how tea is really made and want to make your own teas, come learn about immersive tea tourism in Nepal. Experience Nepal through the lens of tea!

---

2:00 pm Sat. Oct.21, 2023

James Orrock

---

## **Tea Cultivation in the Era of Climate Change**

---

Join James Orrock, PhD as we delve into modern science and discuss how tea cultivation and research is adapting to a changing climate. We will discuss modern tea cultivation, tea breeding, and how tea research centers around the world are adapting. No science background is necessary as we will discuss this in a broad context.

---

3:00 pm Sat. Oct.21, 2023

## **Smart Brewing 4.0**

---

4:00 pm Sat. Oct.21, 2023



Dr. Sally Wei

---

### **Musicali-Tea: Taiwanese Oolong Tea & its Music**

---

Just as proper tea brewing techniques, serving ware complements our tea appreciation and experience, so too can the accompaniment of fine music. Not as a subtle background, but rather another component to your understanding and appreciation of various types of teas. Join Dr. Sally Wei as she takes us on a journey pairing tea and music at a refined level. Understand and experience how both art forms can complement each other. In this session, teas perfectly blended with delicate flowers will be showcased and paired with exquisite florally inspired music. Come and immerse your senses for a unique and valuable experience...

---

11:00 am Sun. Oct.22, 2023

Noli Ergas

---

### **Japanese Tea Varieties**

---

12:00 pm Sun. Oct.22, 2023

Akiko Ono

---

### **Tips for Finding Your Favorite Japanese Teas and Brewing Methods**

---

How do you pick your tea - by flavor, aroma, or health benefits? Join Akiko to explore the diverse world of Japanese tea, rich with varied flavors like umami, grassy and roasty notes, and distinct health benefits. Akiko will guide you on a journey to identify your preferred tea and brewing tips.

---

30 1:00 pm Sun. Oct.22, 2023

Emilie Jackson

---

### **Tea vs. Tisanes: discover the beauty of mother nature**

---

Not all hot herbal beverages can be categorized as tea. Tea comes from the tea shrub (*Camellia sinensis*). From this plant black, pu-erh, oolong, green, yellow and white teas are made. Tisanes on the other hand are often wrongly referred to as 'herbal teas,' but since they don't come from the tea shrub, they're not truly tea. In this workshop you will learn the differences between teas and tisanes, how to brew them and what are the health benefits of those herbs that have been used for thousands of years.

---

2:00 pm Sun. Oct.22, 2023

Rebecca Grzeskowiak

---

### **Tea Cocktails and Mocktails**

---

The Tea Smith, has been working with bars and restaurants for years as the trend towards low ABV and alcohol free cocktails using tea has really taken off. We will share some of what we have learned over the years crafting tasty and innovative tea cocktails, and exciting tea mocktails that make for an enjoyable drink any day, any season, with or without alcohol. You will taste a couple non-alcoholic creations during this session, and walk away with recipes to recreate, and inspire you in your own hospitality journey!

---

3:00 pm Sun. Oct.22, 2023



The George Washington Institute

# Bright Solutions. Profitable Results.

Chartered Master Mariner and global maritime expert on shipboard incidents involving the Pilot or Master.



MARITIME EXPERT GROUP, INC.  
CONSULTANCY & WITNESS SERVICES

[maritimexpert.com](http://maritimexpert.com)

# An American Center Of Civic Leadership

Founded by Sherman Tylawsky, a young professional and George Washington enthusiast whose experiences in politics and U.S. history provide audiences with the most engaging presentations on civics and leadership principles.

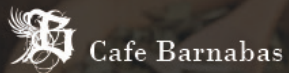
[georgewashingtoninstitute.org](http://georgewashingtoninstitute.org)

Queen's Pantry Teas has one of the Midwest's largest selection of loose leaf tea varieties featuring over 150 blends and over 200 additional bagged teas. Our desire is to share our love of tea with everyone from beginners to life-long tea drinkers.

Located in historic Leavenworth, Kansas since 1999, Queen's Pantry Teas is known for providing high-quality British products, including British foods, groceries, gifts, and teas, to our community and worldwide. We are the destination for everything you need for the perfect teatime. We are a short 30-minute drive from the Kansas City metro area, so plan a day trip and come see us!



[www.qptea.com](http://www.qptea.com) | 913-680-1899



*Cultivating a Life,  
One Tea At a Time*



[cafebarnabas.org](http://cafebarnabas.org)

[nevadateafest.com](http://nevadateafest.com)

# Nevada Tea Festival

**Oct 28th, 2023**  
12-6pm

Casino Fandango  
Carson City, Nevada

nevadateafest.com

# Nevada Tea Festival 2024

Oct 26th, 2024  
12-6pm

Casino Fandango  
Carson City, Nevada



midwestteafest.com

