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Game Set and Matcha

by Annabelle Hood - Thursday May 19, 2011 2:32 pm

Taking part in a traditional tea ceremony was one of the lasting memories of my magical journey in Japan. It went like this: A group of us sat down in a tea hut in a beautiful Tokyo garden, a senior geisha tea master smiled demurely, picking up a bowl and frothing up the green powdery mixture using a small bamboo whisk, before handing shallow



drinking bowls of it out to us. Observing "tea ceremony etiquette", we nodded to her in respect and turned our bowls after each sip. I can see why Japanese royalty, zen monks and the samurai lords of Kyoto loved the whole ritualistic element of this unusual, thick frothy tea, although its bitter-sweet earthy taste takes some getting used to.

Health kick

Matcha tea is not even remotely like the Chinese green tea or Japanese Sencha green tea that you steep in bags. The tepid green froth produced by Matcha's super-fine powder tastes surprisingly thick and bitter, but not unpleasant, a bit like liquid grass. Another compelling reason why I'm so fixated by this ancient green tea is because I know it's so darned good for me (I honestly believe that drinking it several times that week put paid to a suspicious-looking mole, which vanished while in Japan). It's obscenely healthy in fact, being packed with antioxidants and

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