

Reading Tea Leaves - Beginners Guide

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Curious to know what the future will bring? Tea may tell. Tea leaves reading is a centuries old method of telling fortune from tea or coffee. This skill originates from Gypsies and today is practiced in many countries by many fortune tellers or amateur tea leaf readers. Learn how to get started with tea leaf reading at home.

What is tea leaf reading?

Tea leaf reading or Tasseomancy is a fortune-telling method that uses tea residue on the bottom of the cup to predict what the future will bring to the tea drinker. After drinking the tea, the residue on the bottom of the cup forms different shapes or symbols, all with a different meaning and many ways to interpret it. That's why tea leaf reading is not as easy as it sounds. It takes practice, knowledge and a little bit of imagination too.

In the past, tea reading was a quite common and used to satisfy curiosity. Today, it may not be as widespread or as popular as it was in the past. However, it's still a fun way to see both the present and future while having fun, developing creativity and deepening your love for tea.

How to Read Tea Leaves

There are different types of special tea leaf reading cups. Some include zodiac signs, some playing cards symbols. However, regular cups are used too. To read tea leaves, you will need loose leaf tea or ground coffee, a wide regular tea cup, preferably white ceramic or porcelain cup and some knowledge about the symbols. You may be able to use tea bags too, but this is usually not recommended. If you cut the tea bag open and use the dust/tannings. You will be able to steep the tea in the cup to get a residue on the bottom. However, this method will be a lot messier and it won't give the best results—either for drinking or for reading.

Basic steps in tea leaf reading

Tea leaf reading may look easy, but it takes practice and knowledge to know how to interpret leaves correctly. They may have a different meaning depending on other symbols, or how they are placed in the cup.

Only the person who wants to know its future (or present) drinks the tea. Tea reader does not need to drink unless she or he is telling her/his own future. You can read your own cup or find a tea leaf reading specialist, called the "seer." Put some loose

leaf tea in a cup and add hot water. Steep for a few minutes. The drinker should stir the tea leaves in a cup before drinking. After drinking, she or he should take the cup into their left hand and ask any question they are curious about. Don't say questions aloud. Then she or he should turn the cup onto the napkin placed on a saucer to collect the remaining liquid.

Although discarding the tea without drinking it is possible too, it's believed that the person who drinks the tea is able to influence the tea leaves to form shapes and symbols specific to that person only. Don't force yourself to drink tea you don't like or to drink it only for the fortune-telling purpose. Instead, do it at the end of a regular tea drinking session.

Common Symbols and their Meaning

If you want to learn how to read the leaves correctly, you will need a lot of practice, some knowledge and imagination too. The ability to see the shapes, letters or patterns in order to read the fortune from a cup plays an important role in this method. The common symbols include letters, animals, lines and shapes like:

- **snake** meaning enmity or falsehood],
- **spade** meaning disappointment, failure,
- **mountain** meaning hindrance, if there are more than one, but one means the opposite – success]
- **house** meaning changes, success
- **question mark** meaning the outcome of the situation is uncertain
- **acorn** meaning wealth
- **heart** meaning good luck, joy, romance and friendship
- **line** meaning journey; long straight line meaning long journey while a wavy line means delayed journey

Position of the symbols

However, sometimes the placement of the symbols in the cup will determine their meaning too. For example, tea leaves in the shape of a tree can have both good and bad meaning. If the tree is placed closer to the rim of the cup, means your life is in harmony and you are able to solve problems. If it's placed in the middle of the cup, it means you may need a help of friends or family to progress in life or with a current situation. And when the tree symbol is shaped at the bottom of the cup, means your life is not going well. You need to re-think your actions and learn from others who have succeeded.

The position of the shapes in relation to the handle of the cup matters too. In your mind, divide the cup into two parts – a handle and a bowl. Now you will understand which shapes represent the future and which represent the present. Those closer to the handle are related to the present, and those closer to the bowl may imply future events, as long as they have smaller broken leaves that will leave a residue on the bottom of the cup. Long leaves or ball-shaped oolongs are not suitable. Many flavoured teas are not suitable as well, because they contain other ingredients such as pieces of fruits, buds or other. Remember to enjoy your cup of tea too, not only to drink it for the fortune-telling purposes.