



## Tea Time

**The activity is a cross-cultural tea-tasting session to add to an East-African mission story and includes a worksheet. The aim is to provide a multi-cultural experience.**

**Audience – any age, any size group with helpers**

**Time – 10–15 minutes**

**Equipment – thermoses to fill with tea, small cups, paper towels**

**Bible passage – Genesis 18:1–8**

### Leader's instructions

#### **Pre-session preparation:**

Brew strong tea (decaffeinated if preferred). Combine three parts tea with one part milk. (Make sure there is one portion with 'milk-substitute' if any students are lactose intolerant.) Add sugar until it tastes too sweet! Stir in  $\frac{1}{8}$  to  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon liquid smoke flavour (try Wright's Natural Hickory Seasoning) for each litre of finished tea (add just enough so you detect a smoky flavour that is not overpowering).

Serve beef jerky, too, for a fuller snack. With no refrigeration or canning, dried meat is a staple of nomadic herders.

#### **During the session:**

1. Divide the children into boys' and girls' groups and have them sit like proper desert-dwelling nomads. Girls sit on the floor (or ground) with their legs together, straight out in front of them, toes pointed to the sky. Boys squat on their haunches, feet flat on the floor, arms extended in front with elbows resting on knees. (Those boys who can't keep their balance may sit cross-legged so as not to spill their tea!)



2. Give out tea to all the boys first, in order from eldest to the youngest, and then to the girls from eldest to youngest. (If grown men are present, serve them first as a sign of honour.)
3. While everyone drinks, explain to them about their tea:

‘Many desert-dwelling nomads in Africa drink tea. Imagine that! Out there herding camels and goats, but stopping for a “spot of tea!” Some of the world’s finest tea is grown in Eastern Africa.

‘In Kenya, the nomadic herders put milk in their tea. Milk and meat are their main traditional diet. And sugar! Who can turn down a treat like sugar? But do you taste a little smoky flavour in your tea? Does it remind you of sausages? That’s because the nomads store their milk in wooden gourds. They have no disinfectants, like bleach, to sterilise the gourds, and not much water for washing things. But when milk gets old inside a gourd, you need to be able to clean it out, right? How do you think the nomadic herders clean out the gourds? What’s another thing that can kill bacteria and sterilise?

‘That’s right! Fire! When the gourd is empty, nomadic people take hot, burning coals from the fire. They put them inside the gourd, close the lid tightly, and shake and shake and shake! The inside of the gourd becomes very hot, all the bacteria die, and the next milk will go into a safe gourd. That’s why their milk tastes smoky! Smoky and safe! We can learn a lot about surviving in a harsh environment from different people around the world!

‘It’s amazing how hospitable nomadic herders are. Though they have little, by our Western standards, they are generous and giving.’



Look at Genesis 18:1–8. (ICB)



The LORD appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day. Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed low to the ground.

He said, 'If I have found favour in your eyes, my lord, do not pass your servant by. Let a little water be brought, and then you may all wash your feet and rest under this tree. Let me get you something to eat, so you can be refreshed and then go on your way – now that you have come to your servant.'

'Very well,' they answered, 'do as you say.'

So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah. 'Quick,' he said, 'get three seahs of the finest flour and knead it and bake some bread.'

Then he ran to the herd and selected a choice, tender calf and gave it to a servant, who hurried to prepare it. He then brought some curds and milk and the calf that had been prepared, and set these before them. While they ate, he stood near them under a tree.

Nomadic herders in Africa today often welcome guests with as much excitement and hospitality as Abraham did long ago!