

Living as a Non-tea Drinker in a Tea Crazy Nation

FARNAZ FAWAD HASAN

Yes, you read the title right. I don't drink tea. And I know that your mind has already started forming the words, "You haven't had the right tea yet" but trust me no matter how many different kinds of tea you make me try, my unrefined palate won't get accustomed to the acquired taste.

Living in a tea-crazy nation where tea is like social currency, not liking it is akin to committing a crime. The long pauses, intense glares, and the insinuating inquiries that come with my polite declinations of friendly tea offers are enough to make me feel like a social outcast. It often makes me wonder how it feels to be yearning for tea, for I have no inclination for the steamy, leaf-soaked liquid. Sometimes it becomes really awkward in situations where I find myself sipping on a glass of water while everyone else is bonding over the hot beverage.

Things get more difficult when I feel a bit under the weather because the first advice I get is "Drink tea." It becomes really difficult to explain why I don't like tea and that it's not at all a pretentious act. Most people go on blabbering about how they can't live without 'n' cups of tea every day and how "TEA IS LIFE" but to me, it's just flavoured boiled water (I can



Looks appealing, sure. But I don't like tea.

hear peoplegasp in the background).

Although you might judge me for being an "uncultured" oddball, you won't

PHOTO: KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD

be disappointed to know that making tea is actually one of the first skills I learned. Like how my friends and family look at

me when they force me to guzzle down the hot cuppa, I too look at them with anticipation when I serve them my tea. Yes, I occasionally do regret not being able to join in with the storm you brew over a cup of tea or the warmth you tea-lovers feel with each refreshing sip but I do not enjoy drinking tea.

So, how do I survive without tea you ask? It's really simple. I just do. After years of avoiding this leafy gunk, the idea of depending on something for caffeine has become foreign to me. I don't feel the need to drink it nor do I comprehend why people rave about it so much.

However, the older I am getting the harder it is becoming to decline an invitation for a tea party and things of that sort without coming off as rude. This national treasure has truly become an inconvenience for folks like me. Yes, there are a lot of us, just hidden in plain sight.

Therefore, the next time you find someone refusing to drink tea, offer them something else instead. Juice, milk, water, anything. Anything but tea.

If you ever catch the rare glimpse of Farnaz Fawad Hasan sipping on "Maltova Cha" know that she has a super boring class ahead. Reach her at farnazfawadhasan@gmail.com

CARING FOR YOUR CATS THIS WINTER

NISHAT TASNEEM SHAHARA

My newly converted cat-mom friend texted me one night, worried sick. She wanted to know whether something was wrong with her kitten, *Mono*, who has been sleeping too much. I reassured her that eating more and sleeping more is normal for cats in colder seasons.

If you were wondering, this is exactly what it's like to be a cat parent. After about fifty expensive vet visits myself, I have realised that such paranoia is a part of parenthood — even if you are a parent to mean little fur-babies. But my friend's fears weren't entirely unreasonable. Winters can be especially tough for cats, who are more vulnerable to flu or the deadly pneumonia.

This article is a beginner's guide to help you ensure your cats have a healthy, warm winter. Please consult a vet and get professional help when necessary.

STAY IN

Keep. Your. Cats. Indoors. This will guarantee that your cat is not exposed to the harsh cold, or contracts flu from unvaccinated local cats. If your cat is used to being outside, lure them in with warm sleeping spots and fun toys. If heated beddings are too fancy, fill water bottles with hot water, wrap them up and leave them in your cat's favourite napping spots. Keep your cats entertained and well fed, and they will spend more time inside the house.

CAT PROOF

If you haven't already cat-proofed your house, take this opportunity to check everything. Cats tend to seek out



PHOTO: @MIMIDOEASCATTHINGS

warmth during winter and this makes open stoves and old heaters with exposed radiators hazardous. Be vigilant, and limit what your cat has access to.

CALL YOUR VET

It is best to visit your vet right before winter hits. You can get all the necessary vaccinations, ask about any available flu shots and get a general health evaluation done. Discuss the current diet you have for your cat, and ask whether any supplements are necessary. Learn the symptoms for hypothermia, common flu and pneumonia so that you know what an emergency is and what can be handled at home. If you have a senior cat aged above eleven, they may require extra attention. Bring it up with your vet.

FOOD HABIT

Along with any vet approved supplements, introducing natural homemade food into your cat's diet would be a good idea. It will help decrease chances of dehydration as opposed to a diet based on dry cat food. You need to make sure your cat has access to fresh water and remember to change the water a few times daily for it to not get too cold.

We tend to assume our local stray cats are resilient enough to be fine with winters. However, know that short-haired local breeds are more vulnerable to the cold than others. If possible, leave water bowls with fresh water outdoors, where you know the local cats hang out. Check under your cars, bonnets and around the wheels before getting into your car in case any stray cat has taken refuge in the warmth of the car engines. You can also put up temporary shelters for your alley cats in your garage. Let us take care of our *Mono*, and extend that love to those who need it.