

Tip Me Over and Pour Me Out: Tea Parties for Kids

Isn't it funny how parents want their children to care about manners and also want their children to love books? One of the best ways to encourage both these endangered skills is to have occasional tea parties at your house for the kids so they can sip tea, eat sugary treats and discuss their favorite books.

If you give them the chance, kids will dress nicely and use their best etiquette, delighting not only themselves but onlookers as well. Of course the most special treat of all is to be invited to a kid's tea party; you have to be extra special, you know, for this to happen. To help youngsters dream up their ideal tea party event, these books will be helpful.

Tea Party Today: Poems to Sip and Savor by Eileen Spinelli, illustrated by Karen Dugan (Boyd's Mills Press) is as delightful as a cup of strawberry tea, a collection of tea-and-snack poems that includes "teatime tips" on each page as well as multicultural nonsexist illustrations that emphasize that tea time is for young and old, boys and girls, people all over the world. A nice book to share with your teatime attendees!

The Tea Party Book by Lucille Recht Penner, illustrated by Jody Wheeler (Random House)

extols the cozy pleasures of a Teddy Bear Teatime, a Grand Royal Tea and seven more fabulous parties. Included are easy step-by-step directions, creative menus, dainty recipes, hints on how to greet and treat your guests, invitations and favors to make and lots more. The exquisite watercolors are reminiscent of Susan Branch's cookbooks, and the ideas will call children back to this book again and again.

Miss Mouse's Tea Party by Elizabeth Worsley (Holt) tells how Miss Mouse is having a tea for Little Mouse who doesn't like tea, but it all turns out just peachy because she makes cheese sandwiches and orange juice. The box set includes a plastic tea set, board book and stuffed mouse.

Our Tea Party by Kirsten Hall, illustrated by Dee de Rosa (Scholastic) is designed as a beginning reader with flashcards, and tells the charming little story of a girl setting up a tea party for her stuffed bear and live dog, while older brothers heckle and tease in the background. It ends nicely with even the boys joining in for tea, using their best manners. There are party ideas at the back of the book.

Miss Spider's Tea Party: The Counting Book by David Kirk (Scholastic Books) is a brightly colored simplified version of the m-u-c-h longer picture book, this story has one line to a

page and is in indestructible board book format.

The Queen of Hearts by Elizabeth Koda-Callan, author of ever-popular *The Magic Locket* and *Silver Slippers* books (Workman Publishing) features a little girl and her dad making heart shaped shortbread cookies from scratch (called "tea hearts") for her class at school. When mom returns from her business trip she and her little girl enjoy a tea party with the few tea hearts that were saved. The mom gives the little girl a necklace with a heart-shaped cookie cutter, and there's one that comes with the book for the reader too!

Tea Party for Two by Michelle Poploff, illustrated by Maryann Cocca-Leffler (Yearling) shows how Kim and Amy set up the most perfect tea party picnic you can imagine outside under the trees, then race inside to wash their hands. Meanwhile, Hungry Jack the neighbor's dog and his sidekick Walter come upon the scene and help themselves to the "leftovers". It all ends happily with a birthday celebration for Happy Jack.

Tea With Friends by Elizabeth Knight illustrated by Carolyn Bucha (Storey Press) offers menus, unique and interesting tea parties, suggestions for table decorations, even ideas for music to round out the themed tea party with activities and tea lore as well, this

volume is arranged by month and features a "bakers dozen" parties.

Taking Tea With Alice: Looking-Glass Tea Parties and Fanciful Victorian Teas by Dawn Hylton Gottlieb and Diane Sedo (Warner Books) is great for the aficionado of Alice in Wonderland, a treasure trove of ideas for making Alice-themed tea parties for all ages.

Raggedy Ann's Tea Party Book by Elizabeth Silbaugh illustrations by Laura Fillippucci (Simon and Schuster) encourages young readers to join Raggedy Ann as she shows young readers how to mail invitations, plan and make refreshments, organize games and even set the table. Of course, you'll have to invite Raggedy herself to your party to make it complete!

Let's Have a Tea Party by Emilie Barnes (Harvest House) features creative ideas for invitations, recipes and activities along with literary links in this charming pink gingham book for all ages.

And don't forget to take pictures!

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