

Billy Can

AHM004183



Billy Tea and the Goldfields

In general, the miner's diet was simple: including bread (damper), meat (mutton) and tea. Due to the lack of clean water at most goldfield camps it would need to be boiled before drinking, thus tea was a vital part of every meal. Tea came to the early goldfields from China, though in later years tea companies were set-up in some colonies' main cities. The Robur Tea Company was set-up in Melbourne in 1873, the Griffiths Brothers Tea Co. in 1879 and Bushell's Tea started in 1883.

Traditional Billy Tea Recipe

Ingredients:

- Billy Can full of water
- Gum tree leaves (2-3) or lemon myrtle bush leaves or eucalyptus twigs
- 2-3 teaspoons loose black tea leaves
- Sugar (optional)

Method:

Wash large leaves or twigs (if clean water is available) and submerge in a billy full of water. Add black tea leaves. Hang the billy can over a fire until the water boils.

If you are using a billy-can with a lid, ensure that the lid is on tightly then, using a cloth to hold the handle so as not to burn yourself, swing the billy can in a circle to ensure the leaves have flavoured the boiling water.

Wait for the leaves to sink to the bottom of the billy and then pour a cup of billy tea. Sugar can be added to the cup as needed.