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AFTERNOON
TEA

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**“THERE ARE FEW HOURS IN LIFE
MORE AGREEABLE THAN THE HOUR
DEDICATED TO THE CEREMONY
KNOWN AS AFTERNOON TEA.”**

- Henry James -





WELCOME TO THE WONDERFUL WORLD
OF AFTERNOON TEA.

LEGACY

In 1840, Anna Russell, the 7th Duchess of Bedford, asked that a tray of tea, bread and butter, and cake be brought to her room at around 4pm, as dinner was served so late. She took to inviting friends to join her and by the 1880s, Afternoon Tea had become a fashionable way to entertain.

At the time, there were no fine hotels in Cape Town, and Sir Donald Currie, owner of the Union Castle Shipping Line, set out to rectify the situation for his First Class passengers. The Mount Nelson opened on the 6th of March 1899, meeting Sir Donald's dream of being as stylish and elegant as the most fashionable hotels in London.

The Afternoon Tea service was first introduced at The Nellie in November 1989, and served in the lounge from the majestic Windsor Table.

With more than 60 carefully chosen fine, loose-leaf teas from across the globe, a unique coffee experience, and a sumptuous array of sweet and savoury delicacies, "tea at the Nellie" has become a much loved Cape Town tradition.



WANDERLUST

The layout of the Mount Nelson gardens can be traced back almost 180 years to when Hamilton Ross, a prosperous financier, acquired the property. John Ross, his nephew, was a keen landscape gardener, who transformed the surrounding farmland into an elegant estate with trees, an orchard, vineyard, aviary and even a deer park.

Not many realise that Cape Town is served by five rivers and more than 40 Table Mountain streams and springs. Many are now underground but one still flows through the grounds of the hotel. With so much water available, early visitors could enjoy the playful patter of the spray from more than 28 fountains, some sculpted with the family's lion motif.

The meandering paths are sheltered by the dappled shade of heritage trees, some of which have stood guard for centuries. The ancient oak, for example, was planted by Willem F. van Reede van Oudtshoorn, a Dutch aristocrat who owned this tract of land in 1795. The sinuous wild olive is also around 200 years old. Marching up the entrance avenue are Canary palms that were planted in 1925, in honour of a visit from the then Prince of Wales.

These trees have borne silent witness to the many guests who have found peace in the Nellie gardens, including John Lennon, who loved to meditate here.

A special Mount Nelson rose has been bred and is being planted throughout the gardens. It is, of course, pink, the colour that is now synonymous with the hotel, thanks to a grand gesture by one of the former general managers.

In 1918, Aldo Renata Tagliavia wished to mark the end of the First World War in a memorable way. He discovered that pink was symbolic of peace, and painted the hotel in that colour to welcome home returning soldiers. The Mount Nelson has remained pink ever since, and even has its own Pantone shade.



THE MENU

SAVOURIES

Finger sandwiches: Egg mayonnaise, cucumber and spiced chicken salad
Smoked salmon trout on seed loaf
Roast beef and rocket open sandwich
Potato curry empanada
Mushroom and feta tartlet
Roasted red pepper pastry
Bobotie sausage roll

SCONES

Scones
Spiced honey madeleine
Cream, jam, cheese

SWEETS

Raspberry and rose macaron
Coffee hazelnut mascarpone delice
Strawberry mousse
Passionfruit cheesecake
Dark chocolate, raspberry mousse
Peach and Mount Nelson Hotel Tea choux

BUBBLES

RECOMMENDED CHAMPAGNE

Moët et Chandon Brut Imperial N/V
R410 per glass / R1 700 per bottle

RECOMMENDED MÉTHODE CAP CLASSIQUE

L'Ormarins Brut N/V
R120 per glass | R500 per bottle
L'Ormarins Brut Rose N/V
R120 per glass | R500 per bottle



THE ART OF TEA SOMMELIERING

The Mount Nelson is home to South Africa's first expert-trained tea sommeliers. Head Sommelier Craig Cupido is passionate about tea and has an abiding appreciation of this time-honoured tradition.

"I have always felt that tea is about connections; to the people you are enjoying it with and the places it comes from," he says. "I love sharing its many positive properties with the guests and helping them choose the ideal tea to pair with a chosen dish. Many are surprised to find how well tea complements fine dining."

Craig and Vicky, the Mount Nelson Executive Pastry Chef, have curated a menu that presents five delicious delicacies from the tea service, with a perfectly matched global tea pairing.

SOUTH AFRICAN TEAS

AFRICAN PRIDE HONEYBUSH

Honeybush tea flavoured with marula and caramel. Rich, brilliant and brightly coloured, it is well rounded, sweet and full-bodied.

BLOOD ORANGE ROOIBOS

Rich, brilliant and brightly coloured, with the subtle sweetness of blood orange essence. The citrus note is a wonderful complement to the rooibos base.

BUCHU

Buchu was used by the San (the first people of Southern Africa). It is mildly minty with blackcurrant notes and offers medicinal properties for a healthy body and mind.

COCOA ROOIBOS

Rooibos blended with roasted cocoa husks. A comforting combination of the essence of Ethiopia and South Africa that ends on a high creamy note.

GREEN ROOIBOS

Ultra high grade, pure highland rooibos is dried to perfection before full fermentation to produce a greener cup of rooibos, with an interesting combination of grassiness and sweetness.

HONEY BUSH

Indigenous to the fynbos kingdom of the Western and Eastern Cape, honeybush has woody floral notes, with the fruitiness of lemon and oranges, and the nutty sweetness of honey and caramel.



LAVENDER MORINGA

An energising, vibrant, creamy and grassy tisane.

ORANGE AND SPICE

Rooibos flavoured with spicy cinnamon, warming cardamom, comforting cloves, vanilla and orange.

PURE WILD ROOIBOS

Rooibos grows wild on the high-altitude Cederberg mountains. “The red gold of South Africa” is prized for its hints of honey and orange.

STRAWBERRY AND VANILLA

Pure rooibos flavoured with sweet strawberry and vanilla – a children’s favourite.

South Africa has a number of indigenous teas, notably rooibos, honeybush and buchu. All three derive from the distinctive, endemic vegetation known as fynbos, and all are noted for their health-giving properties. The most famous, globally, is the fragrant, vermilion rooibos tea, which has been made and enjoyed for aeons by the people of the Cape. The Afrikaans name translates as “red bush” and references the colour of the mature leaves. Green rooibos comes from the same plant but the leaves are dried directly after harvesting.

LOOSE LEAF TEAS

WHITE TEA FROM CHINA

BAI MU DAN (WHITE PEONY FLOWER)

A delicate orange-coloured infusion with a mild flavour – this tea from China’s Fujian province is made from tea buds, collected and air-dried prior to opening.

WHITE MONKEY

Another great white tea produced in China’s Fujian province (the origin of white tea). A delicate nutty, honey fragrance characterises this fascinating tea.

SHOW FLOWER TEA

FLOWERGATE TEA

A beautiful archway of lily and jasmine flowers unfurls from this tea ball made of top-quality green tea buds.

GREEN TEA

BANCHA HOJICHA – JAPAN

A classic Japanese tea that is lower in caffeine. It is roasted at a high temperature until reddish brown. The flavour is aromatic with roasted, nutty notes.

BI LUO CHUN – TAIWAN

Translated, it means “green spiral leaves of spring”. When infused, the tea boasts the delicate, recognisable aroma of Taiwan’s finest tea.

GENMAICHA – JAPAN

Genmaicha means natural rice tea. Japanese sencha green tea is blended with roasted and popped rice, which gives it a pleasant, nutty flavour.

GUNPOWDER TEMPLE OF HEAVEN - CHINA

Gunpowder tea is dried slowly in rotating drums to a very tightly rolled ball. It has a slightly dry and fresh flavour.

GYOKURU - JAPAN

This is a premier Japanese sencha tea, which is also known as Dew of a Pearl or Most Exquisite Dew Drop. The tea plants grow in the shadow of broad-leaved trees.

MATCHA - JAPAN

The top buds are hand-plucked and allowed to dry. Dried tea leaves are then stone-ground to reveal the ultra-greenness of the tea. Stone grinding is considered an art.

ORANGE AND BERRIES - CHINA

A cleansing and sweetly uplifting, fruit-flavoured sencha tea.

SAKURA - JAPAN

Sakura means “Japanese Cherry Blossom”. This green sencha tea is flavoured with Japanese sour cherries and has the purest, most harmonious fragrance.

SENCHA FUKUJYU - JAPAN

Sencha grows on the slopes of Mount Fuji in Japan. The tea leaves are lightly steamed and dried to preserve their freshness. It has a distinct, strong green-tea aroma.

LOOSE LEAF TEAS

OO LONG TEA FROM TAIWAN

WENSHAN BAOZHONG - TAIWAN

A lightly fermented tea, with a striped appearance and natural crinkles. This tea is sweet in aroma with light floral notes. A long, smooth and lingering aftertaste accompanies every sip.

YUNNAN GREEN - CHINA

This tea has a beautifully earthy sweetness and a clean lightness with notes of spiciness.

ALI HIGH MOUNTAIN OOLONG

Ali Mountain is famous for superior high-mountain tea cultivation in Taiwan. Its aromas and flavours gradually unlock, making it ideal for multiple infusions.

ORIENTAL BEAUTY

This is the finest oolong from Taiwan. Locals also call it “you must be joking” tea, after an interesting tea making accident. The highly oxidised tea has a sweet, smooth taste with a slightly baked, floral aroma and a lightly fruity, honied scent.

The custom of drinking tea dates back to the third millennium BC in China when it was used as a medicinal beverage. By the third century AD, it had become a daily drink. The first consignment of China tea arrived in Europe in 1610. The British introduced tea into India and Ceylon in the mid-1800s.

FLAVOURED BLACK TEA

BLOOD ORANGE BLACK

Black tea flavoured with the slight sweetness and subtle flavour of blood orange essence.

EARL GREY BLUE FLOWER

A classic tea flavoured with uplifting bergamot oil, embellished with striking blue cornflowers.

LAPSANG SOUZHONG - CHINA

This is a classic scented Chinese black tea. The larger souchong leaves are plucked and, after fermentation, they are roasted on a hot iron plate.

ORIENTAL SPICE

A classic flavoured black tea with a touch of oriental spice.

VANILLA

This rich, velvety black tea is flavoured with vanilla pieces – the perfect accompaniment to chocolate.

RED TEA

PU-ERH ROYAL 2009

This tea is grown in the Chinese province of Yunnan. The young leaves and buds from old trees are hand harvested and carefully selected in the early months of the year, between February and March, to capture the most tender part of Pu-erh.

INFUSIONS

HERBAL INFUSIONS

APPLE CINNAMON LAPACHO

The inner bark of the Tecoma-lapacho tree produces an infusion reminiscent of caramel or vanilla but with less tannic acid and no caffeine. The flavour of the lapacho is enhanced with apple and cinnamon in this infusion.

GREEN MATE

The national drink of Argentina, mate's stimulating effect lasts longer than that of coffee. It comes from a species of the holly family.

HIBISCUS FLOWER

Made popular in Egypt and North Africa, this infusion can be enjoyed hot or cold, with or without sugar. It has a tart, fruity tang and a striking crimson colour.

IMMENSELY BEAUTIFUL

A herbal infusion with hibiscus, rosehip, blackberry leaves, lemongrass, hibiscus and peppermint. Lemon and minty notes create a delicious and refreshing herbal cup with a sense of roundness and completion.

NINE LIFE SPICES BLEND

Nine different spices in harmony, including cinnamon, ginger, cardamom, cloves, aniseed, rosemary and thyme.

FRUIT INFUSIONS

PEPPERMINT LEAVES

Pure peppermint leaves imbue this infusion with refreshing and aromatic properties.

PURE CHAMOMILE FLOWER

A mild infusion, known for its sleep-inducing properties and sunshine-yellow colour.

SNOW MOUNTAIN CHRYSANTHEMUM

One of the most popular flowers in Asia for scenting teas, chrysanthemums grow wild in the high mountains near Tibet. Round and sweet, the leaves are ideal for multiple steeping.

FOREST BERRIES

An intensely fruity, pink infusion of elderberries, raspberries, blackberries and strawberries.

LEMON

A soothing blend of apple, rosehip, lemon, lemongrass and lemon flavour.

MANGO

A fruity, fragrant infusion of hibiscus, apple, mango and lemongrass.

MARULA PEACH

A pleasant infusion of hibiscus, apple, peach, rosehip and marula.



VICKY GUROVICH

The cake table at the Mount Nelson is often described in write-ups and reviews as “groaning” with a monumental array of freshly baked, decadent cakes, tempting tarts and luscious loaves. The selection changes daily and showcases the creative and culinary genius of our pastry chefs, under the leadership of Vicky Gurovich.

A celebrated and award-winning pastry chef, Vicky ensures that Afternoon Tea at the Mount Nelson fulfils its legendary status as the most celebrated and sumptuous tea service in Africa.

She once told “Eat Out”, one of South Africa’s top food guides, why she finds pastry rewarding: “It’s very scientific, meticulous, and you still have great freedom with flavours. All fresh ingredients are fair game.” And the secret to her exquisite confections? “I think if I can recreate a happy moment from childhood, then I’ve done my job. My top tips for home bakers are that butter and eggs must be room temperature for baking, and always put alcohol in the malva pudding!”

SCENTED OOLONG TEAS

JASMINE DRAGON PHOENIX PEARLS - CHINA

A limited production of top-quality jasmine tea from the Fujian province in China. This famous tea is made from tender and healthy green tea shoots, hand-rolled in spring. Long leaf tips are scented with freshly cut jasmine blossoms and are then rolled into small pearls, locking in the flavour and aroma.

JASMINE PEACH - CHINA

Floral jasmine and creamy peach flavours combine to create this full-bodied tea. Simple yet filled with aromatic and flavourful memories.

BLACK TEAS

ASSAM BUKHIAL - INDIA

Assam full-leaf second-flush tea has a typically strong and earthy flavour.

CEYLON PETTIAGALLA - SRI LANKA

This fine Ceylon comes from the Dimbula area in the Balangoda District. It has a dark red colour and is highly aromatic with a mild taste.

DARJEELING PUTTABONG FIRST FLUSH - INDIA

Puttabong is one of Darjeeling's most prestigious estates. This tea is a typical first-flush tea, with its carefully rolled leaves producing a light, aromatic and flowery infusion.

DARJEELING SECOND FLUSH BLEND - INDIA

This single origin Indian tea is highly aromatic with a lingering flavour.

ENGLISH BREAKFAST - UNITED KINGDOM

A full-bodied, aromatic tea with sweet, fruity notes. A wonderful tea to start the day.

KENYA MARINYN - KENYA

Neatly twisted, gold-tipped leaves steep to produce a robust, medium-bodied tea with a slightly fruity-floral taste.

MALAWI OP1 - AFRICA

A black tea bred and developed in tea estates more than a thousand metres above sea level in Thyolo, Malawi. Fruity and sweet notes.

MOUNT NELSON HOTEL BLEND

A contemporary classic - our exclusive blend of six international teas from Africa and Asia, flavoured with the buds and petals of our signature Mount Nelson pink roses.

RUSSIAN BLEND - GLOBAL

Based on a classic Russian blend, this tea is highly aromatic with influences from India and China.

YUNNAN BLACK GOLD - CHINA

Produced from 300- to 400-year-old trees growing in the birthplace of tea itself. The leaves carry a sweet maltiness and a touch of smoke and pepper.

COFFEES

AMERICANO

Single shot of the Mount Nelson's Own Blend, topped with water.

AFFOGATO

Vanilla ice cream served with a single shot of the house blend.

CAPPUCCINO

Single shot of coffee, topped with steamed milk.

COLD BREW COFFEE

24-hour slow-brewed, African single-origin coffee, served over ice.

ESPRESSO

Single or double shot of the house blend.

ESPRESSO MACCHIATO

Single or double shot of the house blend, topped with steamed milk.

FLAT WHITE

Single shot of coffee, topped with steamed milk.

FRAPPÉ

Single shot of the Mount Nelson's Own Blend with milk and sugar, served over ice.



ICED COFFEE

Single shot of the Mount Nelson's Own Blend, topped up with water and poured over ice.

LATTE

Single shot of house blend, topped with steamed milk and served in a long glass.

LONG BLACK

Double shot of coffee, topped up with water.

MOCHA

Single shot of the house blend, topped with steamed milk and flavoured with chocolate.

RISTRETTO

Double shot of the Mount Nelson's Own Blend, poured as a single shot.

Coffees at the Mount Nelson are individually prepared using the pour-over, Clever Dripper or siphon method to extract the perfect brew. The hotel's baristas use only the best single-origin beans from sustainable sources in Africa. The coffee is served with milk, oat milk, soya milk or almond milk.

OTHER HOT BEVERAGES

ROOIBOS CAPPUCINO

Ultra high grade, pure highland rooibos, served, cappuccino-style with frothed milk. A fragrant, caffeine-free brew.

HOT CHOCOLATE

Immensely comforting and delicious, for when only chocolate will do.



Nellie, our hotel house cat, is one of our permanent guests. He assumed occupation a few years ago and has been elegantly basking in the sun or haughtily stalking through his domain ever since. He adores smoked salmon and expects to be served a weekly treat of clotted cream.

