

# *Katherine's*

## PERFECT CUP OF TEA

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While most days, a tea bag (my favorite is PG Tips) and a cup of just-off-the-boil water are all you need, on other days, you might enjoy savoring the tea-making experience.

Here are a few of my tried-and-true steps to the perfect cup of tea. Try gathering a friend or two and enjoy slowing down with this intentional tea-making process together.

### **STEP ONE:**

Use a quality loose-leaf tea. It is considerably better than using a pre-packaged tea bag. Store your tea in a cool, dry, dark place.

Tea needs room to open and expand, so opt for a bigger infuser or bag for your loose-leaf tea.

A good rule of thumb is one teaspoon of loose-leaf tea for every 6 oz of water. You can use individual cups or a teapot.

### **STEP TWO:**

Use fresh, filtered water.

TIP: Do not reheat water that has already come to a boil.

Tea needs the oxygen in the water to bloom, and boiling the water removes some of the oxygen. Over-boiled water has a bit less oxygen and tea can end up tasting a little metallic.

Bring the water to a boil and remove from heat as soon as it boils.

If you really want to be precise, experts recommend different water temperatures for different kinds of tea in order to ensure the best flavor.:

Green tea: 170°F

Black tea: 210°F

Oolong tea: 180°F

Red or herbal tea: 210°F

### **STEP THREE:**

Let the tea steep. Different teas require different steeping time. Remember that the color of the tea does not determine if the leaves have fully steeped.

Here are some general guidelines:

Green tea: 2-3 minutes

Black tea: 3-4 minutes

Oolong tea: 5-6 minutes

Red or herbal tea: 5-6 minutes

If you would like stronger tea, use more tea instead of steeping longer.

### **STEP FOUR:**

Add milk, sugar, or lemon, depending on personal tastes.

You might try pouring milk into the cup before adding the boiling water. Some claim that this helps the tea from tasting "stewed."

Include a few small treats to share with your friend, and sit back to enjoy some conversation over tea.



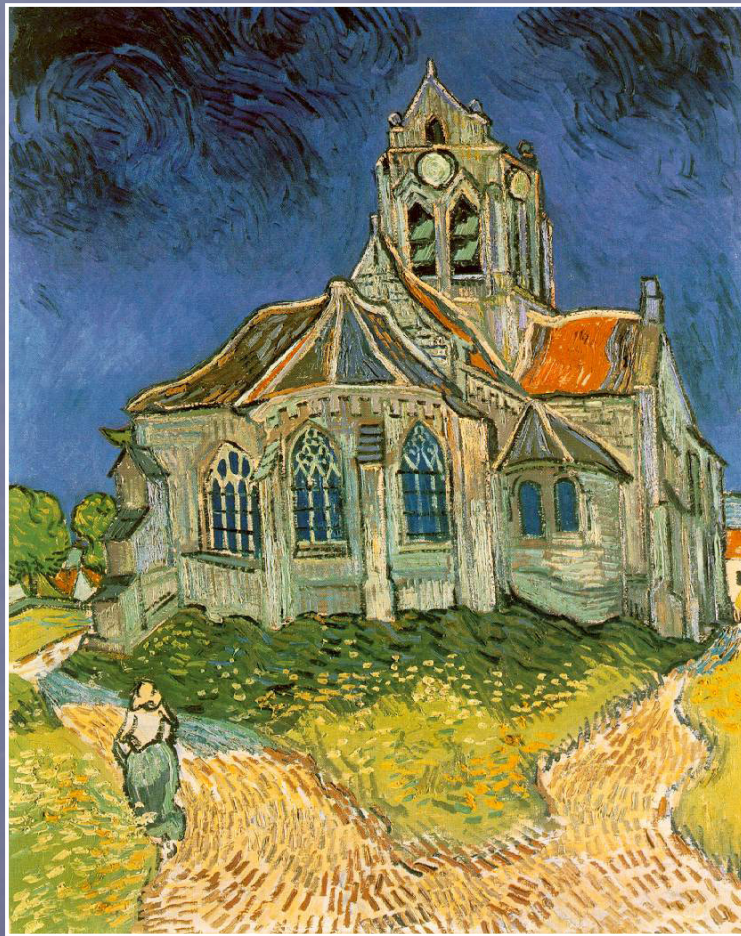


*"All shall be well."*

**JULIAN OF NORWICH**



# Visio Divina



Relax, close your eyes, and take some deep breaths as you prepare for prayer. Remember that you belong to God, and God is here with you.

Open your eyes and gaze at the image above.

Slowly and prayerfully scan the entire image, watching for details that catch your attention. If your eye is drawn to a certain part of the image, take time to linger there. What questions come to mind as you ponder what you see? What thoughts, emotions, or memories are stirred? Does a word or phrase or image arise in you? Speak with God about what you notice.

As you continue to prayerfully observe the image, consider these questions:

*What do you need from God right now?*

*What might God be saying to you?*

*Is there an invitation?*

*How might you respond?*

As you finish your time of prayerful reflection, take a moment to make a few notes on this experience. Try not to censor yourself. Just jot down whatever was stirred in you, including any so-called negative emotions or responses. What might be behind these? Speak with God about any longings, hopes, resistance, or fear. In the coming days, consider revisiting the art and the thoughts and invitations that emerged as you prayed.