Taking Tea at GracieMei’s Tea Room in Franklin, TN

GracieMei’s Tea Room, 214 South Margin Street, Franklin, TN 37064. Phone: (615) 599-1668, “High Tea” served by reservation only.

By Kay Reed

Located just south of Nashville, Franklin offers a pedestrian-friendly historic downtown that features architecture from the early 1800s and sparkles with gems of small gift shops, antique stores, and restaurants. Residents refer to the atmosphere of Franklin as like that of Mayberry. Small town America is alive and well in Franklin.

GracieMei’s Tea Room is nestled along the streetscape in Historic Franklin, serving “high tea” and lunch to visitors and area residents. Named after the mother of proprietor Martha Mitchell, GracieMei’s

A prop fashioned like a Victorian lady with a billboard greets guests with a welcome message as they step into the front of the building designed to look like a small, country cottage. The spacious interior of the tea room seats around 60 people, in two dining areas, and in a lovely garden at the back. Colorful ladies’ hats, feather boas, china and artwork on the walls create an inviting, cheerful atmosphere in the two dining rooms. The server encourages guests to get into
the sprit of tea by offering those hats and boas for “dress up.” The tea room also
offers delightful tea-related gift items for purchase.

**First things first in taking tea, the server offers guests their choice of tea**
from an attractive wooden box containing an assortment of Stash tea bags. The
pot of tea is then brought to the table in a sturdy Brown Betty pot, covered with a
charming tea cozy. Though the tea is made from tea bags, it is steeped to
perfection, and the pot refilled when requested. Now, the fun begins.

**Tea fare, served in three courses**, begins with a plate of scones. The scones
are presented with dishes of strawberry jam and clotted cream. Next comes the
two-tier stacked server, filled with tea sandwiches, fruit, and adorned with flowers
for garnish. The sandwiches are the traditional ones with cucumber, chicken
salad, tuna salad, pimiento cheese, and bacon with tomato.

Finally, the server presents a dessert plate, garnished with chrysanthemums and
delphiniums. The desserts are familiar tea fare, such as ginger cookies, petit
fours, and pecan tarts.

While the tea room offers an afternoon tea, most of the business of the
establishment is lunch. Lunch fare is seasonal and very well presented. On this
occasion, a buffet in the dining room was covered with homemade cakes that
were delicious looking. Lunch fare looks very tempting; however, clients cannot
make reservations for lunch. Reservations are required at least 24 hours in
advance for “high tea.”

The homeyness and lively atmosphere at GracieMei’s is worth an outing to
Franklin if you are in the Nashville area.

Kay Reed is Assistant to the Dean of Graduate Studies at the University of
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studying the social history of tea.