



Frequently Asked Questions

Exhibiting at the Northwest Tea Festival

About the Northwest Tea Festival

The Northwest Tea Festival (first held in the fall of 2008) is not-for-profit 501c3 organization that is a unique gathering of tea lovers, fanatics, providers and consumers. Over two days, tea is discussed, dissected, tasted, debated, amplified and reduced to its basic element. Festival attendees are presented a number of opportunities to sample dozens of teas provided by vendors and at focused tea tastings. They will be able to participate in workshops and presentations on tea and expand their knowledge, experience and enjoyment of this wonderful beverage.

Our main mission is to - *Connect people and enrich lives through tea, by providing a diverse range of educational and cultural experiences.*

Who organizes the Northwest Tea Festival?

The tea festival is planned and staffed by volunteers, all tea lovers coming from a diverse background. Everyone is welcome (tea related businesses and private individuals as well) to become active in the planning Northwest Tea Festival. We invite you to join us and share and expand your experience with tea. Contact Jessica Campbell at JessicaC@nwteafestival.com for more information.

Who are and how many people attend the Northwest Tea Festival?

At our last tea festival, we had over 3100 people attend the festival with many attending both days. We anticipate that this year's attendance levels will well exceed that of last year. All attendees were eager to learn more about tea. They came from all walks of life, with a wide range of experience with tea. Some are just beginning their familiarity with tea and only have experienced tea using tea bags; others have traveled extensively in tea growing parts of the world and have wide knowledge with many aspects of tea. Attendees will visit every booth, some many times, to learn more about and taste different tea. Attendees at this event are already tea drinkers and will provide a ready audience for your excellent tea products.

What types of businesses participate as vendors?

We seek out vendors who have quality tea and tea related products to offer. At our last festival, we had a total of 45 exhibiting vendors – coming from across the U.S. from the states of Washington, Oregon, California, New York, North Carolina, Illinois, Massachusetts, Wisconsin, Arkansas, Georgia, Connecticut and Idaho. Also, some vendors came from outside the U.S. from Japan. These included tea shops (both those who had physical stores and those who sell only on the web) who sold tea and tea ware, crafts people who sold tea related accessories (cozies, etc.), and tea companies who blend and source fine teas from all over the world.

What can I sell at the festival?

The festival's focus is the education about tea so we ask vendors to focus on selling tea or tea related items. Other items can be sold or show-cased as long as the majority of the items are tea focused. Keep the number of items show-cased to a manageable number.

What kind of sales can I expect?

Among the vendors who had a retail focus, average gross sales range from \$1000 to \$3000 or more. In addition, vendors also experienced new sales at their stores or web sites following the festival. In addition to the benefit of sales at the festival, another major valuable benefit is in the marketing of your products and business name.

Vendors who have had booths at previous festival have reported:

- “(festival) Sales exceeded a good day in the shop “
- “We had new customers (coming into our store) who saw us at the festival”
- “After the event, the number of visitors to our website increased”
- “There are always people who come to the shop as a direct result of the festival. Many of them have become regular customers.”

Vendors who have had booths a number of years in a row have reported that each year at the festival is better - some have reported that each year their festival sales have increased 30-40% from the previous year. Festival attendees who have come to earlier festivals look for favorite vendors they found in previous years. Vendors who participate each year in the festival develop a “following of customers”.

Will there be water available for my tea preparation?

Ample quality of filtered water suitable for preparing quality tea will be available for vendor use. If you plan to serve tea samples (which we encourage), you will need to provide equipment for the heating of any water used. Ample electrical service will be provided to each booth for this purpose.

How can I participate as a presenter and/or as a leader of tea tasting sessions?

At our last tea festival, there were 36 presenters leading 58 educational wide-ranging presentations about tea. All of these events were filled with enthusiastic tea drinkers eager to expand their experience and knowledge about all aspects of tea. These presentations are a major education component of the festival.

All vendors are encouraged to be a presenter leading a stage presentation, workshop or tea tasting sessions. This is an excellent opportunity for you to share your knowledge of and enthusiasm for tea. The subject material presented can be related to your experience with tea. You select the material to be covered and it can be geared toward the beginner tea drinker, the more experienced or anywhere in between. Festival attendees range from beginning tea drinkers to those who have a vast experience with tea. Further information can be obtained by contacting the education coordinator, Jessica Campbell – JessicaC@nwteafestival.com

What time restraints will I have to set up and take down my booth?

Setup of the booth will occur during the Friday afternoon just before the weekend of the festival. Take down will commence immediately at the close of the festival on Sunday. All vendor booth materials need to be removed Sunday. There will be specific load in/out times provided to you with detailed maps of areas where loading and unloading can safely occur. Some four-wheel carts will be available for your use. Vendors are encouraged to also provide their own hand trucks, etc. for additional use.

What can I do to insure I get the most out of participating in the Festival?

The festival is an educationally focused event. Keep your booth layout manageable and plan to educate the public about tea in general and about your products specifically.

Booth layout - Plan to have your booth setup to accommodate many visitors.

Booth Staffing - Attendees will have many questions about tea in general and your products specifically. Be sure that there are people available experienced with your products specifically as well as with tea in general.

Giving Samples - Most vendors who sold tea found it most beneficial to give samples of their teas. Each festival attendee will have their own ceramic tasting cup to allow them to sample your teas. If you are giving samples of specific tea or other products, be sure you have ample supply to sell. People will want to buy what they like at the festival. Again, plan what is manageable for you, pick 2-6 of your best selling teas to sample. Most past vendors have reported that giving samples was:

- “We think giving samples is effective”
- “... it was important to offer tea samples of the product we were showing”

Other Marketing – Participation in the festival provides an excellent and unique marketing opportunity. Your companies’ name will be listed on the festival web site with links to your web site. This site is available on the web 24 hours a day so it provides exposure both before and after the festival. Promoting your presence at the festival through newsletters, store coupons, etc. has been very effective in the past. You will also have the very valuable opportunity to speak directly to tea drinkers about your products. Be sure to have the following:

Product information handouts available, business cards and any other signs and graphics that will inform festival attendees about your products.

Past vendors have maximized their benefits of participating in the festival by the following:

- “We always give out discount coupons, post posters in our (store) windows, and give out "save the date" cards to our customers.”
- “We sent a news letter to our local customers to let them know about the event. We also made sure visitors to our booth had an opportunity to sign-up to maintain email contact with them.”
- “We gave promotional flyers to festival attendees; handed out coupons that enticed people to spend them in (our store) and handed out promotional items such as pens.”
“We provided “event special discounts” which attracted many of attendees.”

What are some other benefits of participating in the festival?

- It will expand your customer base as festival attendees should be your customers.
- Participation would help make your business synonymous with high quality teas. The festival is all about promoting enjoyment of quality teas.
- Involve your store in the increasing and rapidly developing tea renaissance currently taking place across the United States.
- Fit with your overall commitment to being an active integral part of tea community activities.

Vendors who have participated in the past have reported these additional benefits:

- “Meeting with friends, talking with tea lovers, and having a chance to educate people about Japanese green tea. People were highly motivated to learn about tea and tea culture, and it was fun to talk with them. If you participate in the festival, your company/café/teahouse will be known by local tea lovers!”
- “I could meet many tea professionals, tea vendors, and tea lovers at the festival. Being friends with these people is very beneficial not only for my business, but also as an individual.”
- “Networking with the tea community”
- “We have fun and we believe it helps us make a lot of new contacts both with customers and with the tea world.”

What if I have other questions about participating at the festival?

Visit our web site at: WWW.NWTeaFestival.com

We will be posting festival plans as they develop on our web site.

Contact the festival planning committee.

Jessica Campbell – Committee chair – JessicaC@nwteafestival.com

We welcome your participation in this year’s festival. Please do not hesitate to contact us.