

Victoria Tea Festival Exhibitor

Frequently Asked Questions

1) What sort of tea companies participate in the festival?

The festival appeals to tea companies from all levels of the industry. Local restaurants, tea houses and cafes as well as local retailers and tea destinations benefit from having the festival in their own backyard! Any tea company who sells on the web, or through the mail can gain new business and wholesalers always find the event an excellent opportunity to showcase their products to the retailers and hospitality industry attendees. Big or small, this event can benefit almost anyone in the tea business!!

2) How should I design my exhibit?

The event is focused on being interactive and educational to the tea consumers. We suggest a visual display that displays your tea and makes it available to touch and smell. To keep your exhibit manageable, we suggest picking 2-5 of your signature teas and serving small 3oz samples. Previous years, exhibitors were surprised how many customers instantly ordered a tin or bag of a tea after tasting it. So have lots of inventory to sell – especially products you are sampling. Be sure to have information describing how or where people can find your product in an easy to hand out format. Business cards attached to a free tea sample pouch were particularly effective last year and coupons help with customer tracking.

3) Can I run my exhibit with just one staff member?

Yes. We are providing each exhibitor with a volunteer who has been orientated on how to support your exhibit effectively. We are careful to not oversell the event and keep the environment intimate in order to ensure you have a steady and manageable flow of traffic at your exhibit. A regular sized booth sampling a few specific teas, could be run by one on-site staff member. (although two makes it twice as manageable and three makes it fun!)

4) How is it that North America's largest public tea exhibition is only \$225 (after discounts) for a draped booth with tables and chairs and water all included?

The power of volunteers. Unlike other trade shows for the coffee and tea industry, this event donates 100% of its revenue to support a local worthy cause. This dedication attracts over 120 volunteers to organize and manage the event. This, along with strong sponsorship support, allows us to make the event very accessible for tea companies.

5) Why donate 10% of your retail sales?

To keep the event accessible for small and midsize tea companies, we set our exhibitor fees very low. Each exhibitor is then asked to donate 10% of their retail sales (before taxes) to the cause. This way, if the exhibitor has not had a successful weekend – they are not burdened with high overhead. Signs are

placed on exhibitor tables stating "10% of festival sales donated to Camosun College Child Care Services" and this seems to motivate customers to shop as well as help preserve the "fundraising" profile of the event.

6) I notice there are lectures and demonstrations happening all weekend. I am a tea expert and would be a great presenter! How can I be involved?

We would gladly review your submission to present a lecture or demonstration. Please fill out the application available on the website. We are looking for informative, 40-minute lectures and/or 30-minute demonstrations on tea related topics. Please try to pick a specific topic, rather than try to cover entire aspects of the world of tea. Presentations must not include self-promotion or product references. A travel reimbursement of \$100 is available for presenters traveling from outside of Vancouver Island.

7) Why have I never heard of this event before?

This is our 3rd year! Year one was very small, as our volunteer organizing committee figured out how best to approach management of the event long-term. Year two enjoyed a 300% rate of growth, but was still hampered somewhat by a limited marketing budget. Year 3, 2009, will be our first year as a two-day event and with strong financial resources.

8) Is there a kitchen or banquet facility that can help me prepare my tea and samples on-site?

No. You must have a fully self-contained exhibit. You will need to bring your own kettles, pots, utensils, etc. Power can be purchased from the Victoria Conference Centre/Crystal Garden and volunteers will be on hand to assist you with preparation and maintenance of your exhibit. There are no dishwashing facilities on site either.

9) What efforts have been taken to make this event eco-friendly?

As we have grown, this has become more of a concern for exhibitors and organizers alike. In 2009, two major steps are being taken to reduce the footprint of this event. Sample cups will be biodegradable and made from cornstarch. All tea leaves will be collected for composting by a local compost company.

10) I am a great advocate for tea and the blossoming tea industry. Is there any way I can support this event further?

Thank you for asking. Our greatest challenge continues to be promotion. If you could add our pre-designed logo (with a link to our website and "proud supporter of the Victoria Tea Festival") in a prominent location on your website that would be very helpful. Also, any in-store or mail promotions that your business can provide would be very much appreciated. Finally, sponsorship is the most mutually beneficial way of supporting this event. For as little as \$500 you can be an event supporter and benefit from this year round exposure and we will invest your donation into developing and promoting this event.