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## How To Make Cemetery Tea

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# **How to Make Cemetery Tea**

*By Lauren Coyne*

## How to Make Cemetery Tea

This is the perfect recipe to make on sunny, summer, Saturday mornings when you have a few hours to spare. September mornings when the fog starts rolling in, but before the temperatures get too cold, are also a great time to make it if you want a stereotypical spooky ambiance to help enhance the recipe.

### *Ingredients*

1 formerly abandoned cemetery full of tombstones

3 gallons of distilled water\*

6 soft-bristled toothbrushes\*

1 heart full of compassion and patience

\*Depending on the state of the cemetery and how many residents it holds, this amount might need to be adjusted.

### *Time needed*

As much as you are willing to give considering this is a weekend morning when you could have just slept in instead.

### *Instructions*

1. Enter the cemetery and locate a suitable tombstone. These can be distinguished as having indecipherable inscriptions due to factors such as coverings of dirt, moss, or bird droppings, rather than age.
2. Pour a small amount of distilled water over the tombstone, making sure to concentrate most of the flow over the parts with inscriptions. Brush the stone with the toothbrush using similar motions to how you would brush your own teeth.
3. Contemplate what would happen if you actually brushed your teeth with the now dirty toothbrush. Decide that it would probably turn your teeth that same shade of green from the weird Shrek-themed ketchup you saw once from a movie promotion for *Shrek 2*. Shudder at the mental image.
4. When the toothbrush bristles are completely coated green, dip the brush into the opening of the water gallon and swirl it around until the bristles are clean again.
5. Remove the brush and swirl the water itself, admiring how it looks like what you assume green tea would look like if you actually drank tea. Contemplate drinking from the gallon, and decide it isn't worth the probable consequences. Especially if it does, indeed, taste like tea.
6. Repeat steps 2 through 4 until the tombstone looks legible and mostly clean, except this time try to determine whether that is the letter "O" or "D" on the name part of the inscription. Decide it is probably the letter "D," because

“Oamien Oanielson” doesn’t actually sound like a real name—even accounting for the fact that people used to be named some really weird things in the past. Things like “Prudence,” “Agamemnon,” and “Fanny.”

7. Pour the remainder of the first gallon of water over the tombstone and give yourself a satisfied nod and metaphorical pat on the back at how clean it now looks.

8. Shuffle a few feet to the right so that you find yourself kneeling in front of the next tombstone.

9. Huff in disgust at the blatant disrespect for the dead when you find that the tombstone is knocked over, probably by some hooligans, and decide to set it back upright. Grip the tombstone in both hands. Start wiggling it and trying to prise it from where it has sunk slightly into the ground, much like how you would wiggle a loose tooth you were trying to prise from its spot in your gums. Give your past self a thank-you at having the foresight to trim your nails the prior evening, because otherwise these actions would get a lot of dirt under your fingernails, and that stuff is not fun trying to clean out.

10. Go back to step 8 when you hear hissing and see beady eyes and flicking tongues peeking out from beneath the stone and realize that you are in the process of taking the roof off a snake nest. Never speak or think of step 9 again, and vow to skip that step in all subsequent attempts to make cemetery tea. Except for the part about the nails, because you are still immeasurably proud of your past self for thinking ahead like that.

11. Repeat steps 6 through 8 until you run out of either ingredients or tombstones, changing the contemplations from step 6 to subjects such as:

-Why is the black moss so much more difficult to clean off than the green moss?

-Is that little statuette missing its head supposed to be a cat, or a lamb? (Decide it is a lamb, since after the inscriptions on the stone it is attached to are fully legible you realize that the person it belongs to was less than three years old when they died.)

-Is the person buried here related to your fourth-grade bully, since they have the same last name? If they are related, then does this count as more proof that your bully was a terrible person, since they’ve left maintenance of their family member’s final resting place up to a volunteer? Or would the relationship be so distant that it doesn’t really count?

-Why are these epitaphs so much cooler sounding than any poetry you could possibly write yourself?

-Where should you get lunch after this?

-Is that a dug-up skull over there, or just a very round and white rock?

-If your roommate hasn’t cleaned their dishes from the sink by the time you get home, should you eat their last pudding cup as a form of revenge?

-Can you count all these steps your Fitbit is giving you because of your moving arms as part of your actual exercise for the day, or should you just suck it up

and go on an actual walk later?

-Why were tombstones so much cooler looking back in the day than they are now?

12. Wipe your brow and sigh in satisfaction of a job well done before gathering up all your refuse, since littering is bad. Especially littering in a cemetery.

13. Swirl the two inches or so of green water left in your last gallon and contemplate once more how much it looks like what you assume tea looks like. Pour it on the ground in front of the last tombstone you worked on and pretend that you're pouring out libations for whoever is buried there. Some woman named Bailey, apparently? At least, you think they're a woman. Bailey is technically gender-neutral, after all.

14. Walk out of the cemetery gate, intending to head for home, but pause at the last second and look back. Contemplate your own mortality, and wonder if these people, whoever they were and wherever their souls may be now, would be upset that a total stranger was the one taking care of their earthly remains. Or would they be happy that someone, anyone, still cared about them after all this time?

15. Go home and wash your hands thoroughly in the thankfully dish-free sink, and give your past self yet another pat on the back for their foresight with the whole nails thing. As hard as it is right now to get all the mud and green stains off, you know it would be ten times harder if your nails were as long as they were last night.

#### *Serving size*

No one should ever actually drink cemetery tea, except for possibly the grateful dead if that really did count as pouring libations. Hopefully if it did, then the "it's the thought that counts" principle was in full effect, because you can't imagine that cemetery tea would taste good. Not even to the deceased.

Possibly it would taste worse than actual tea, which is gross enough on its own.