

Make Innovation HAPPEN



MIH Knowledge Article: Innovation in the Scottish tea sector

Scotland
A LAND OF
food and drink

SCOTLAND
IT'S TIME TO INSPIRE

The logo consists of the word 'CAN' in white text on a teal vertical bar, and the word 'DO' in white text on a yellow vertical bar, positioned to the right of the teal bar.

A cup of tea used to be just that, a cup of tea, but now all sorts of things are happening in the industry, opening up opportunities for Scottish food and drink companies to make their mark on the traditional brew.

After water, tea is the most consumed beverage on the planet. The tea market is continually evolving. There are over 3,000 different varieties of tea and with this much choice, the doors to innovation in the industry are wide open.

So, what's the sector up to, and where's it headed next?

Tea cocktails

Coffee, has long been matchmade with alcohol. It's had its spirits lifted in the shapeshifting form of Espresso Martinis, coffee liqueurs and after dinner Irish coffees for some time now.

Just this year, The Espresso Martini Society, set up a late-night speakeasy for six weeks in London, with 20 different Espresso Martinis on the menu.

Tea too is dancing to a similar tune, exploring its spirit-infused options, diversifying and populating cocktail lists, as well as supermarket shelves.

Noveltea

Two Germans, Lukas Passia and Vincent Efferoth, launched the catchily named, Noveltea, last year.

Inspired by the British love of tea and gin, their Tale of Earl Grey offering, is an infusion of black tea with gin and botanicals. While their Tale of Tangier, is a fusion of Moroccan green tea with Caribbean white rum and spices.

Noveltea's loose-leaf tea is cold-brewed for about eight hours to optimise the health benefits and flavour profiles. It has an alcohol content of 11% and can be enjoyed over ice, heated up, or to make cocktails.

Scotland's Teasmith

Aberdeenshire's Teasmith, launched its premium Scottish gin, infused with hand-picked Ceylon tea, back in 2016.

It's a gin blend of juniper, coriander, orange peel, honeyberry, liquorice, orris and angelica roots with hand-picked Ceylon tea sourced from the Amba Estate in Sri Lanka. The estate where Scot, James Taylor, founded the first tea plantation in the country, back in 1867.

Teasmith has concentrated on this provenance, product quality and innovation, in order to stand out from the crowded craft gin market, both in Scotland and abroad.

Tea is ready for innovation

As well as spirit-infused tea cocktails there are also great opportunities to position tea products for the health-focused consumer, who believe the wellness claims that surround tea drinking.

Tea-based soft drinks, iced teas, cold brew teas, bubble tea, and sparkling and fermented versions are growing in popularity.

Kombucha, for example, is going down a storm around the world, and bringing tea to a younger demographic. And this younger demographic is also being enticed by non-alcoholic cocktail-flavoured teas.

Growth Opportunities

Traditional tea drinking is part of the Scottish way of life, so it will always be popular and endure. But innovation in the sector holds so many exciting opportunities, and reinventing the traditional, could stimulate it further, and attract a younger consumer.

If you're interested in opportunities in the tea sector, or another part of the food and drink sector, our innovation team can help you realise your company's potential.

Innovation support for Scottish food and drink companies

Make Innovation Happen is a single source of innovation support for businesses involved in the Scottish food and drink supply chain.

Scotland Food & Drink, Scottish Enterprise and Highlands & Islands Enterprise work in partnership across academia, the public sector and the industry to deliver a comprehensive innovation support service.

Make Innovation Happen can help your business by providing:

- [Access to 'connectors'](#), who can offer support, advice and mentoring, as well as direction to appropriate support
- Ideas and insights on how to innovate through articles and events
- Funding through the [Collaborative Innovation Fund](#)
- Help to access other innovation services provided by Scottish Government, [Scottish Enterprise](#), Highlands & Islands Enterprise, Interface and others

To find out more about the support available, please get in touch with the Make Innovation Happen team:

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