



Tea: Addiction, Exploitation, and Empire

Roy Moxham

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Tea came late to England—after its arrival in Portugal, Holland, and France—but quickly became a national obsession. Tea gardens and shops sprang up everywhere in seventeenth-century England. Demand soon spread to the colonies, where the heavy taxation on tea led to smuggling on a massive scale and, in the New World, cost England her American empire. Tea drove the British to war with China, to guarantee the supply of pekoe, and it prompted colonists to clear jungles in India, Ceylon, and Africa for huge tea plantations. In time, the cultivation of tea would subject more than one million laborers to wretched working conditions. Hundreds of thousands of them would die for the commodity that for four centuries propelled Britain's economy and epitomized the reach of its empire. With the same colorful detail and narrative skill that pushed *The Great Hedge of India* to international success, author Roy Moxham, once a tea planter himself, maps the impact of a monumental and imperial British enterprise. In this new volume, he offers a fully fascinating, and frequently shocking tale of England's tea trade—of the lands it claimed, the people it exploited, the profits it garnered, and the cups it filled.

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Mandy Conway:

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