



Stir in Some Fun

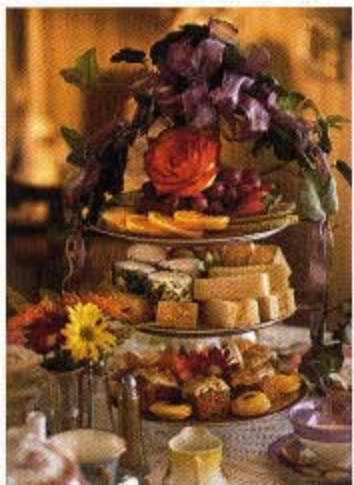
Miss Mable's Tea Room serves tea with two lumps of laughter.

Sure, at Miss Mable's you have elegant place settings, scrumptious scones, and of course, tea-cream-sugar cube combinations that are lavish enough to be courses by themselves. But this Dickson, Tennessee, icon offers its patrons the extraordinary chance to be ladylike but loud, fine mannered but fun, all at the same time.

Eat, Drink, and Be Merry

The laughter begins as tea takers are encouraged to don some element of finery while they sip. Their choices range from lavish mink stoles to bright feather boas to one of 400 hats decorating the rooms. A waitress pipes in, "If you can reach it, you can wear it."

When Fay Davidson opened Miss Mable's in 1995, she wanted to create a lunchtime haven. Growing up, Fay visited her grandmother in Virginia and was introduced to a social scene where ladies lunched, planned charity functions, and escaped their routines "simply by spending time together and having good fellowship," she says.



clockwise from top, left: All dressed up, a customer enjoys her camomile tea. What better way to make new friends than to gush over similar feather boas? These dainty delicacies are just one course of a tea session. The owner's chariot awaits her.

Fay knew the women of Dickson could appreciate this camaraderie. What better way to accomplish it than through the most feminine meal of all—afternoon tea?

Happiness in a Cup

Though conversations may be light-hearted, the fare at Miss Mable's is nothing to laugh about. For a complete experience, attend a full afternoon tea (\$15.95, plus beverage, tax, and gratuity), served 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. The menu for this themed meal changes every month.

Each course is a new arrival of sensational taste, starting, of course, with a pot of tea. Guests can pick either the monthly featured tea or choose from a list of more than 80 teas, including decaffeinated, green, and white tea selections. Try Kiwi Melon or Bourbon Street Vanilla (\$3.50 for a two-cup pot).

The four-course meal features scones and preserves; a lunch entrée; a tea tray with finger sandwiches, tea breads, fresh fruit, and pastries; and a dessert.

My experience at Miss Mable's was decidedly rose colored, starting with a velvety rich glass of Raspberry Rose Soup and a melt-in-your-mouth Rose Petal Scone. Be generous with the Chantilly Cream, which will make your taste buds sing. Save room for the flavorful tea sandwiches, prepared with fresh herbs from the garden right outside.

Whatever you do, don't forget to bring a camera to capture every nibble, sip, and giggle. **KIRSTEN ROCKWOOD**

Miss Mable's Tea Room: 301 West College Street, Dickson, TN 37055; (615) 441-6658 or www.missmable.com. **Afternoon tea:** 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday. ♦