

Oily Cart

**Oily Cart's
Sensory Tea Party
1 - 31st May 2026
Host Handbook**



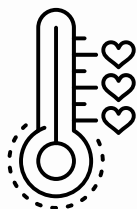
**Something's brewing...
and you're invited!**

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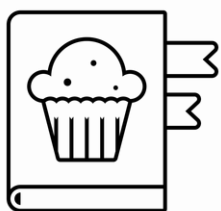
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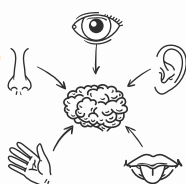
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Overview



Throughout the month of May we are inviting our friends and families **to host their own Sensory Tea Party.**

A Sensory Tea Party is a great way to **bring people together, delight their senses, and make a difference!**

This pack will give you everything you need to know about **how to host** your own Sensory Tea Party, as well as **how to share your proceeds** with Oily Cart, and **the impact that these funds will make.**

Thank you for expressing an interest in supporting our fundraising efforts. **We really value the support of our community** and supporters in helping us to bring the joy of Sensory Theatre to more children and young people across the UK.

Sensory Tea Party Campaign details



Supporting Oily Cart

All funds raised will directly support our pioneering sensory theatre for babies, toddlers, disabled / neurodivergent children and young people and their families. Over 45 years, Oily Cart has been crafting interactive, sensory performances, that invite children into playful, magical worlds. We tour in a wide range of formats, to a range of spaces, to ensure that every family feels welcome, and that each child can engage in a way that makes sense to them. When you take part in a Sensory Tea Party, you're helping Oily Cart continue this extraordinary mission.

Why a Sensory Tea Party?

A sensory tea party is a gentle, familiar setting where guests of all ages can explore textures, colours, smells, and sounds while also coming together as a community, and provides opportunities for connection and joy. It gives you a recognisable format in which you can embrace the 'sensory' theme as little or as much as you like. You can keep it really simple with tea and cakes, or you can embrace our 'sideways' thinking by testing out some of our sensory activity ideas. We hope that our Sensory Tea Parties inspire joyful, imaginative and inclusive gatherings that bring people together, to delight all your senses and make a difference.

Sensory Tea Party Campaign details



How Your Support Helps

Your donations help Oily Cart to:

- Develop new sensory shows for children and their families, who experience multiple and complex barriers to access.
- Support babies in their critical first 1001 days of development, creating life-long impact.
- Reach more families across the UK, who are otherwise excluded from shared cultural experiences.
- Share our sensory resources with families across the UK.
- Continue championing the right of every child to experience world-class theatre / creativity, inclusion, and joy for every child

Campaign Target: £2000

Campaign link: [Big Give Portal](#)

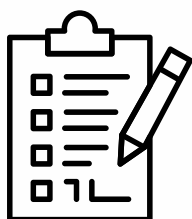


Thank you for being part of this celebration, and for supporting us to bring joy, wonder, connection, and meaningful sensory experiences to even more children.

Plan your Sensory Tea Party



Choose a date in May, find a space (this could be at home, at work, or for a bigger event in a school or community hall).



Plan your party. You can try some of our sensory activities theme your event (Mad Hatter's Tea Party, vintage 1950's, or any theme you like!) or just enjoy a cuppa and a slice of cake. Whatever brings you and your guests the most joy.



Invite your guests. You can use our [invite template](#).



Prepare your space. You can print out our [sensory tea party bunting](#), or you can get creative in how to make your decor more sensory!



You can [print out hand-outs](#) for guests so they understand the impact of their donation.



Celebrate what you have achieved! Please share any pics from your event online with the hashtag **#SensoryTeaParty** Don't forget to tag us **@OilyCart** (we are currently on Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn)

How to pay in your proceeds



Option 1:

You can collect donations in cash from your guests and pay the equivalent amount into our [Big Give portal](#) which will be live from 1 - 31 May 2026.



Option 2:

You can print [this handout](#) for your guests so that they can make a donation privately.



If you have proceeds to donate after the closing date of the campaign, please don't worry, just contact zoe@oilycart.org.uk who can provide our bank details.

Recipes

Ideas for party food that will tickle your senses!

Honey Lavender Cupcakes

- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup creamed honey
- 1 egg white, room temperature
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup dairy-free yogurt, room temperature
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup dairy-free salted butter, room temperature
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup all-purpose flour *can sub gluten-free 1:1 baking blend
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon fine sea salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup lavender milk (recipe on next page)

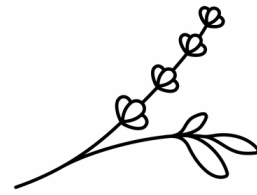


Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 350°C and place 8 cupcake liners in a cupcake pan.
2. In the bowl of a stand mixer with the whisk attachment, combine the butter and creamed honey and beat together on high until light and fluffy (approximately 5 minutes.)
3. Add in the egg white, vanilla extract, and yogurt and mix on high for 1 minute.
4. Add in the flour, baking powder, and salt and begin to mix on low.
5. With the mixer on low, slowly pour in the lavender milk and mix until just combined. Be careful to not overmix the batter or it will cause the cupcakes to be gummy in texture.
6. Fill each cupcake liner approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ full with the cupcake batter and bake for 15-17 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.
7. Remove the cupcakes from the oven and allow them to cool for 10 minutes. Gently remove each cupcake from the pan and place them on a cooling rack to fully cool.

Lavender Milk

- ½ cup (120ml) dairy-free cup milk
- 2 teaspoon dried lavender



Instructions

1. In a small pot combine the milk and dried lavender and bring to a boil over high heat.
2. Remove from the heat as soon as it starts to boil and allow the milk to cool to room temperature.
3. Strain the lavender from the milk and discard the lavender. Set the lavender milk aside.

Honey Lavender Buttercream

- ½ cup (120g) butter, room temperature
- 2 tablespoons creamed honey
- 1½ cups (360g) icing sugar
- ¼ teaspoon fine sea salt
- 2 tablespoons lavender milk



Instructions

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer with the paddle attachment cream the butter and honey together on high for 5 minutes until light and fluffy.
2. Add in the icing sugar and salt and mix on low until combined.
3. Add in the lavender milk and mix on low until combined.
4. Turn the mixer to high and allow to beat for 5 minutes until light and fluffy.
5. Top the cupcakes with the frosting and enjoy.

Marmite Caramel Cupcakes

Use the following recipe to transform basic vanilla cupcakes into an unforgettable umami / sweet taste experience!



Marmite caramel

Makes a bowl, what you don't use, you can save, spoon on icecreams, pavlovas, eat straight from the jar...

125ml cold water

330g caster sugar

250ml double cream

Marmite to taste

Frosting ingredients

For 12 cupcakes (Double this recipe if you are making both the caramel and the chocolate marmite cupcakes)

250g icing sugar

62g cream cheese

32g unsalted butter

Vanilla Cupcakes:

Follow any [basic cupcake recipe](#)

See intructions on next page...

Instructions

Make your caramel:

- Combine the sugar and water in a medium sized saucepan until it dissolves.
- Bring it to the boil, without stirring, until it's a deep amber colour (too dark and it has a bitter note. Remember the Marmite will also darken the colour).
- Brush down the sides of the pan with a brush dipped in water to prevent crystallisation.
- Swirl for even browning.
- Remove from heat once desired colour is reached.
- Whisk in cream carefully.
- Add Marmite to taste once it's cooled down enough to taste it without burning your lips and tongue, but warm enough to melt and blend in the Marmite easily.
- Set aside a small bowl of the caramel into which you can mix more Marmite, making a much stronger 'hit'. This I used for the centres, the rest will be mixed into the frosting.

Then make your frosting:

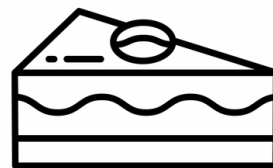
- Beat 1/3 of the icing sugar with cream cheese
- Melt butter in a saucepan.
- When icing sugar/cream cheese mixture is smooth, add the remaining icing sugar until incorporated.
- While still beating the mixture, pour in bubbling melted butter. Beat until smooth, but don't overbeat.
- Fold through the caramel. However be careful not to fold in too much or your frosting will collapse.
- Cover the frosting with clingfilm so that it doesn't crust over and put aside.

Assemble your cakes:

- Then for the vanilla cupcakes, first brush the top of each cake with the sugar syrup. This keeps them moist.
- Cut out a little cone in the middle of the cake.
- Fill with the strong Marmite caramel mixture.
- Replace little 'hat' of cake.
- To mix Marmite caramel into the frosting, put some frosting into a bowl and slowly add the caramel, not the other way round. You don't want your frosting to be so sloppy you can't top the cake with it.
- Frost the cakes with your palette knife.
- Decorate.

Classic coffee Cake

- 170g butter, plus extra for the tins
- 170g caster sugar
- 3 large eggs
- 170g self-raising flour
- 1 tablespoon of cooled instant coffee dissolved in 1 tablespoon of hot water (add more if you like it stronger)



Icing

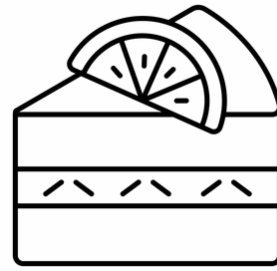
- 225g icing sugar
- 100g butter
- 1½ tbsp instant coffee dissolved in 1 tbsp hot water
- strawberry jam(optional)
- walnuts or cherries, to decorate (optional)

Instructions

1. Heat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan. Line and butter two 18cm sandwich tins. Add the sugar and butter to a bowl and whisk until very fluffy and pale.
2. Whisk the eggs in a mug with a fork, then add them gradually to the mixture with 1 tbsp of flour each time. (Make sure you don't use all the flour.) When the eggs have been fully combined into the mix, add the rest of the flour and fold it in gently.
3. Add the dissolved coffee to the mixture, still folding. Divide into the sandwich tins and cook for 25-30 min until risen and firm and a skewer inserted into the middle comes out clean. Leave to cool in the tin for 5 mins then turn out onto a wire rack to cool completely. Can be frozen at this stage.
4. Meanwhile, make the icing by beating the icing sugar with the butter until light and fluffy, then add the dissolved coffee. Whisk, then cover and set aside until ready to ice the cake.
5. Spread half the icing on the bottom of one sponge and spread the strawberry jam on the bottom of the other, if using. Sandwich together, then spread the remaining icing on top. Decorate with walnuts or cherries, if you like.

Citrus Cake Recipe

- ½ cup (120ml) oil
- ½ cup (120g) sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 1 tablespoon orange zest
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon lemon zest
- ⅓ cup (120ml) orange juice, juice of one large orange
- 1 cup all-purpose flour (120 grams)
- 1.5 teaspoons baking powder

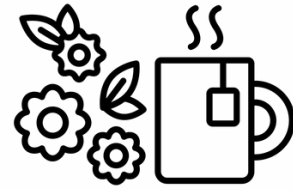


Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 175°C. Add the oil, sugar, eggs, and vanilla to a blender and blend for 20-30 seconds (do not over blend). Pour the blended mixture into a bowl and mix in the orange zest, lemon juice, and orange juice.
2. Add 1/2 of the flour and mix. Now, add the other 1/2 of the flour + the baking powder. Mix until combined.
3. Pour the batter into a loaf pan that is lined with parchment paper.
4. Bake for 25-30 minutes (depending on the oven) or until a toothpick comes out clean. Enjoy!

Dried/Fresh Mint Tea

- 1 cup (240ml) water boiled to 100°C
- Choose dry or fresh herbs
- 1-2 tablespoons of dry herbs OR a small bunch of fresh mint leaves



Instructions

1. DRY: Crush dried herbs a little before steeping to help release essential oils.
2. FRESH: Muddle (gently rub, bruise or crush) fresh herbs to release essential oils.
3. Pour boiling water over herbs
4. Let steep for 3-5 minutes, then strain and serve

Alternative flavours

- Fresh lemon & ginger
- Fresh ginger & turmeric
- Tarragon
- Orange & Mint
- Lemon & rosemary

Alternative tea suggestions:

- Bubble tea! (now available from major supermarkets to make at home)
- Iced teas like Cucumber Mint Ice Tea
- Tea-based spritz, like Strawberry & Raspberry Spritz
- Tea-based cocktails or mocktails

Other recipe suggestions:

Sweet:

- Earl Grey Cupcakes
- Lemon Drizzle traybake
- Scones
- Liquorice & Toffee Cupcakes (sprinkle some salt flakes on top - salty liquorice is a thing - for a salty sensory surprise!)
- Chipotle Chocolate Cupcakes (the hot one!)
- Mango & Chilli Cupcakes (OK, another hot one...)

Savoury:

- baking fresh bread for sandwiches
- Elvis Sandwich: A toasted banana, peanut butter, and bacon sandwich, providing a mix of creamy, crispy, sweet, and savoury.
- Sausage & Marmalade: Grilled, halved smoked sausages topped with orange marmalade, offering a caramelized, sweet, and citrusy flavour.
- Pear-Walnut Sandwich: Cream cheese and chopped walnuts combined with fresh pear slices, offering a nutty, crisp crunch.
- Smoked Salmon Cupcakes
- Meatloaf Cupcakes with Mashed Potato frosting

Sensory Activities

Here are some ideas for you to up the sensory element of your tea party!



**Adult sensory suggestion:
Room scent**

Ingredients

- 1 cup water (or 240ml)
- 1/4 cup (60ml) rubbing alcohol or witch hazel
- 20-30 drops of essential oil(s) of your choice

Instructions

Combine all in measuring cup, then add to a spray bottle. To use your room spray, give the bottle a little shake before you spray just to make sure the essential oils are well combined.

You can spray the room just before your guests arrive to give them an extra sensory welcome.

Fun fact!

Did you know that smell makes up 80% of what we can taste?

Sensory Activities for kids

Taste-safe “Cloud” Dough

Cloud Dough is a simple playdough that even your little ones can help you make. No cooking required! The texture is wonderfully soft and pliable for hours of playdough fun.

Ingredients

- 2 Cups (480g) of Flour
- 1/4 Cup (60ml) of Vegetable Oil
- Food Colouring
- Scents, Extracts, or Essential Oils



Instructions

1. Add 2 cups flour to a large bowl.
2. Mix 1/4 cup of oil with your chosen scent, and 1 Tsp of water colour food colouring – gel colouring isn’t affective
3. Add the coloured oil to the flour; stir to combine.
4. Knead the dough with your hands to distribute colour and oil.

‘Flavour’ suggestions:

- Mint extract
- Lemon / lime
- Cinnamon & apple
- Cocoa (just add cocoa powder!)

Play suggestions:

- Cupcake cases & spoons
- Cookie cutters to make different shaped ‘cookies’
- ‘Toppings’ like marshmallows
- or just let them squish, squeeze and use their imaginations!

Tea Party Sensory Play

Some optional 'ingredients'

- Real or toy tea sets
- Measuring cups or spoons
- Trays
- Fruit-themed reusable ice cubes, or try freezing ice cubes with berries, herbs or other surprises in them.
- Rice or lentils
- Herbs (that can also be used for your herbal tea)
- Citrus fruit
- Coffee beans



Play suggestions:

Cover a table with a spill-proof tablecloth. Fill a teapot with warm water, rice or lentils. Play with pouring these into cups - or directly into the tray. You can play with temperature, exploring warm water and ice cubes as a contrast.

Use a metallic, mirrored tray or simply a shiny tin foil oven tray for added reflections.

Explore the scents of the citrus fruit, coffee beans or natural herbs. You can use a pestle and mortar, or lemon squeezer or grater to extract more scent from these.

Fun fact!

Did you know we have as many as 33 senses?



Oily Cart Sensory Tea Party Music Mix!

Oily Cart has created nearly 100 shows over the past 40 years. **[Click here to access some of our favourite tunes on Spotify](#)**, if you're looking for musical inspiration for your tea party.



Oily Cart Films

If you would like to introduce your guests to more about Oily Cart, here are some links to videos you might choose to play:

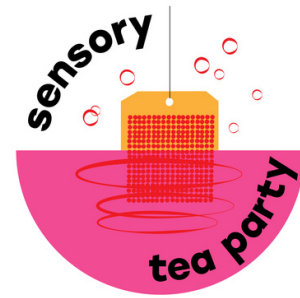
Oily Cart past shows:

[Oily Cart | Join us in making theatre more accessible](#)

[Oily Cart | Highlights from 40 years](#)

[A World Beneath Us | Sensory Film](#)

Oily Cart's sensory approach



3D Theatre!

Take a deep breath.

Feel the weight of your body against your chair.

Tilt your head.

Stretch your body.

Looking straight ahead, become aware of the space around you. Build a full picture, taking in what's in front and on each side of you.

And... relax.

You've just used more than five senses. That's right – as well as sight, sound, touch, taste and smell, we have a sense of balance, a sense of where our body is in space, a sense of movement... In fact, we have as many as 33 senses! They help us perceive and understand the world, support us to move through it, and contribute to our wellbeing.

Theatre traditionally focuses on only sight and sound – so what happens when it expands out to all these other senses?

Oily Cart has been exploring the answer for 45 years. What has evolved over the decades is an entirely new, living, breathing, fully-feeling type of theatre: Sensory Theatre. And what we've learnt is that it can make theatre so much more accessible and inclusive.

Expanding out to all the senses can lead performances off the stage, and into a hydrotherapy pool. It might happen in a library or a hospital, a park or a playground. Each sensory performance considers the entire environment: it is as much about texture, taste, colour, weight, vibration of sound, temperature and touch as it is about words and visuals. It immerses audiences into whole new 360 ° worlds, as their whole selves.

How many of these sense can you bring to your Sensory Tea Party?!

Keep us posted [@OilyCart](#) **#SensoryTeaParty**