

Emma's Tea Spot: Worth a Stop

My best friend Shannon of 30 years invited me to share a cup (or two) of tea with her at a new little place called Emma's Tea Spot, which is situated in the thriving community of Hamilton at the corner of Harford Road and Hamilton Avenue. She made us an appointment for 3 at 11 am. (Naturally, I brought Teagan along.) From the moment we stepped through the door, we were transported to a whimsical universe of butties, sarnies, scones, biscuits, and, of course, tea.

A bubbly woman behind the counter took our orders. I knew within moments that she had to be Emma. She was genuinely excited to tend to her guests' every need, including Teagan, whom she presented with a thin brown cookie (or biscuit) - "on the house." Emma and her equally friendly staff spread good cheer throughout the comfy little space, dropping off pots of tea, plates of tea sandwiches (butties and sarnies), and bowls of homemade soup, all of which were the perfect complement to a blustery January day.

Shannon ordered the hibiscus tea and a scone the size of a saucer accompanied by sharp cheese, jam, and citrus fruit. I had the tomato sandwich on homemade bread and a pot of my favorite Earl Grey tea - this time with lavender! British rock music set the background and my eyes kept peering over the variety of teas and British groceries offered for sale along the back wall. (I could use some HP sauce, after all!)

Joy exuded from every detail from the one-of-a-kind hand-crocheted tea cozies to the mismatched china to the original mosaic ceramic tile and hardwood floors to the tiny succulents planted into teacups showed a great deal of love. I got the chance to talk to Emma about her place and she revealed the great secret behind this Baltimore gem.

Emma moved from England to Baltimore in 2005 with her first husband. After their marriage fell through, she moved to Hamilton and met her husband Benjamin, whom she married in June. He encouraged her to pursue her dream of working for herself. Emma said "after God had granted us a second chance it was up to us to honor him by being authentic and pursuing our dreams in gratitude for the gift."

She sees Emma's Tea Spot as "a casual approach to the Tea Room - how it is actually done in England in a modern setting. This creates an environment for more than just old ladies who love tea. A community hub a place for all ages and sexes to gather. Our mission is to make everything from scratch using the best local and British ingredients. It is not a quick bite but, like tea, it takes a little time. We aim to nourish people and reintroduce them to their community and relationship with food."

And Emma and her Tea Spot are not done growing. She says, "we will be expanding and leveling up as time goes on, constantly changing and evolving - we have a gift shop and offer gift basket services, in the spring we will have local flowers and organic plants for sale, in the summer we will sell local fruit. We have bakery, eggs, bread, milk, produce, meat and cheese for sale by the pound as well as our lunch and tea options. We hope to be a place where people gather and can rely on us."

I'm looking forward to visiting Emma's in the summer to enjoy a sandwich prepared with the world-famous Maryland tomatoes and a salad comprised of greens that were picked that morning. In the meantime, I'll be stopping down from time to time for the perfect treats to warm me up on these bitter winter days. (If I lived closer, I'd be there every day!)