Microwave Lavender-Apple Chai Tea
- a recipe from Nancy Baggett

Nancy Baggett is the author of the award winning The Art of Cooking with Lavender, which is on sale wholesale at www.nancyslavenderplace.com She also writes a free, quarterly Culinary Lavender Newsletter; check it out and sign up on her website.

Lavender-apple chai tea is a simple, truly delightful way to answer the question, "I have some culinary lavender buds, what can I do with them?" If you prefer to avoid caffeinated tea, you can choose among several brands of decaffeinated chai tea bags, such as Twinings, Bigelow, Celestial Seasonings and Stash.

This easy, three-ingredient recipe (plus water) also offers insight into some of the many ways lavender can enhance your cooking: It's a surprisingly versatile herb and mingles beautifully with all the so-called "gingerbread" or "pumpkin pie" spices. So, you can add it, finely chopped or ground, to enrich the taste of spiced fruit pies, cakes or cookies.

Tip: The recipe may be doubled, if desired.

1 cup apple juice
3/4 cups water
1 teaspoon dried culinary lavender buds
1 regular or decaffeinated Chai-flavored tea bag
Honey or other sweetener

Combine the apple juice, water, Chai tea bag and lavender buds in microwave-safe tea pot (or substitute a large glass measure). If the pot has a strainer-brewer insert, put the lavender in the insert; otherwise just stir it in. On high power, heat the tea just until it almost comes to a boil, 2 to 3 minutes depending on your microwave wattage. Immediately turn off the microwave, but to avoid any chance of a boil-over, let the tea stand in the microwave for 3 minutes to steep and cool slightly. Steep longer for stronger tea.

Remove the strainer inset and tea bags and pour the tea into a large mug or two tea cups. Or, lacking a strainer insert, remove the tea bags, then the lavender by straining the tea through a fine sieve into the mug. Stir in honey or other sweetener to taste. Enjoy!