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In a coffee crazed society, it's nice to know that there are still alternatives to frappes and double-shot espressos. Walk into Tippi Teas at one of two locations on the west side where jars of loose leaf tea line the walls. Seventy-five different kinds of teas, from the U.S. to Africa are just a cup away.

Co-owner Jose Murguia said that tea starts conversation.

"Both my wife and I enjoy tea quite a bit," Murguia said. "We were living in the south of Mexico, and we had a lot of herbal infusions. From there, we started getting more and more into it [infusing teas]. Then we did two years of traveling across the world, while we attended workshops. We don't have a certification; it's more of an experience for us. I think it's more valuable because you can get it [a certification] online. Finally, we

came home and opened up Tippi Teas. We both have marketing degrees. We felt disappointed with how the world

"A tippy tea plant is a plant that has a lot of tips, so it means it's a high quality plant. Tippi also makes reference to the Native Americans and so we changed the y for an i and that's it. Tippi Teas."

JOSE MURGIA  
co-owner

worked. We wanted to sell something that we believed in, like fair trade, natural drinks and ecology."

Tippi Teas isn't just about tea. The menu also includes all natural smoothies, fresh juice, tea squares, pound cake and granola. Prices range from \$3 to \$5 per tea. Juices and smoothies run about \$5.

"There are so many herbal aromas," employee Kimberlee Taylor said. "We use almond milk and when people order it, we steam it. Then it starts to smell almondy, nutty, herbal and it just smells good. We make tea pop and I just think the teas are extraordinary. They all have health benefits. We don't use artificial sweeteners or syrups in any of our drinks, so everything is fresh. That really makes a difference."

The first Tippi Teas opened at 5034 Doniphan five years ago, but demand for a location closer to UTEP led to the opening of a second store four months ago at 2501 N. Stanton. Senior Diego Oropeza recently discovered Tippi Teas



5034 Doniphan

near UTEP.

"My friend and I found it after searching for tea places in El Paso," Oropeza said. "The barista introduced me to all kinds of teas that I hadn't heard of. She said that a particular one helped with allergies. I ordered the hot orange chai tea. Tippi Teas has a cool atmosphere; it's a cool place to just hang out. The staff is helpful and friendly. I even liked the music they played."

Everything about Tippi Teas makes it unique from any other place in El Paso, according to Murguia.

"The atmosphere is inspiring," he said. "Since tea creates conversation, with conversation you can talk to somebody else. That somebody else will always give a little bit of their energy to you. When you have tea, it makes you stop and think. By doing that, you get somewhere. That is where you get inspired. A cup of tea can clear everything, if you are having a bad day, it can make it better. If you are having a good day, it can make it better."



Co-owner Jose Murguia prepares a white cherry tea for a customer at the Doniphan location. (all photos by jonathan castro)