

## notable edibles

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Herbalist Katinka Locascio perches at Sweetleaf with one of her healing custom tea blends. The elixirs are available at the café.

## Healthy to a Tea

**LONG ISLAND CITY**—Back in Sweetleaf's cozy vinyl room, where café patrons rifle through Dionne Warwick and Ozzy Osbourne albums while waiting for their pour-over coffees to cool, a red apothecary cabinet hangs on the wall. Inside sit Mason jars brimming with the likes of burdock root, milky oats and arnica flowers—herbs, perhaps unfamiliar, begging to be explored. It is Katinka Locascio's hope that curious customers will do just that.

"I have an interest in connecting people to the environment, and helping them find it through a cup of tea," says Locascio, the massage and craniosacral therapist who founded

Earth + Sky Healing Arts, run out of Queens West Health and Wellness in Long Island City.

In addition to Sweetleaf's regular tea menu, Locascio custom-blends a selection of herbal concoctions for the café. There's an antioxidant-laden Bright Eyes Cleanse melding goji berry, lemon balm, chrysanthemum and a wild mountain flower Locascio became smitten with on a trip to South Korea; a spicy ginger-elderberry elixir that helps ward off colds; and Immune Boost, which contains dandelion leaf, cocoa nibs, peppermint and astragalus root.

Locascio's passion for healing herbs is not surprising. Her mother

was a homeopath and her grandmother once foraged for dandelions and nettles to feed her children in wartime Germany.

In 2008, Locascio apprenticed at the Heartstone Herb School in Ithaca. Before long she was making her clients soothing herbal teas that she now sells out of her Zen office apothecary.

Budding herbalists will want to accompany Locascio when she leads 90-minute nature walks and foraging tours through the Long Island City Community Garden this July and August. "I always feel like it's our birthright," she says, "to know how to heal ourselves with what's around us." 🌿

### WHERE TO GO

**Sweetleaf**  
10-93 Jackson Ave.  
Long Island City  
917-832-6726  
sweetleafllc.com

**Earth + Sky  
Healing Arts**  
5-31 50th Ave.  
Long Island City  
917-725-0299  
earthandskyhealingarts.com