

Tea Caddy in Embossed Tin, Hand-Painted, with Internal Locking Lid, circa late 19th - early 20th century.

Measures approx. 5" wide x 4" tall to the tip of the lid x 3" deep. Features embossed and hand-painted high 3D relief floral artwork on all external surfaces. The internal lid features a copper ring for opening, and a latch on the inside which goes into the lock. The lock is stapled to the front wall of the caddy. Please be aware that the key is missing. However, it looks like it was a very simple key. With a bit of patience and dexterity, the mechanically inclined among us may enjoy trying to make a fitting key. As far as we could see inside, the lock is completely rust-free and has a good chance to be in working condition.

Both the lids, especially the internal one, offer a lot of advertising information about the company, Kuznetsov & Co. The company was founded in 1840, as stated on the external lid, with headquarters in Moscow but many other offices across Russia and 4 offices abroad, including London, in those times the world center of tea trade. The company's trademark, crossed anchors in a circle, is displayed on the outer lid as well as on both sides of the internal lid. The underside of the internal lid also features a list of teas offered by the company, together with their price, and a description of flavor and strength qualities. The list includes Chinese tea (with fine aroma and delicate taste), young leaves harvest tea (with strong taste and dark color), and Ceylon tea (with dark color and strong aroma). By late 19th century, Kuznetsov & Co. was one of the largest tea trade enterprises in the Russian Empire, second only to Vysotsky & Co. It was also one of the largest in the world and one of the most profitable enterprises in the Russian Empire.

In good to very good condition. Structurally, the caddy is sound, showing only very shallow dents on the right side of the outer lid and at the center of the front wall. There is also a small corner bump to the far right-hand corner of the outer lid. The paint on the floral bas-relief is mostly intact. In some spots the paint is rubbed off the high points but only a couple of leaves around the keyhole show mild rust. Most of the metal showing through the rubbed-off paint is rust-free.

Overall, this is a rare, beautiful and very informative "window" into the Russian fledgling capitalism in the 19th century, mere half a century before it would all be ruined by the Bolsheviks. And, of course, the caddy makes a fantastic artifact for your Imperial Russia display.

Please note that the podstakannik in our last photo is for size reference only and is not part of the sale.

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\$250.00

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