TeaVoila

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At the intersection of wellness, sustainability, and innovation, TeaVoila is more than just a tea brand—it's part of a growing movement toward mindful eco-conscious living. Founded by Souzan Gerami, the brand offers a bold reimagining of one of the world's most beloved beverages—tea, the second most consumed beverage worldwide.

Born in Germany and raised in Iran, Gerami was steeped in the culture of tea from an early age. "Loose-leaf tea was part of everyday life," she says. "It wasn't just a drink—it was connection, ritual, and care." But when she moved to the U.S. in 2000 and encountered a standard tea bag for the first time, she felt something essential was missing—the aroma, flavor, and richness she cherished. That realization sparked what would eventually become TeaVoila.

"It took me a while to figure it all out," Gerami recalls. "I was busy with kids and family, but the idea kept coming back to me. I spent two years developing the concept. Eventually, I decided I was going to go for it. I handled everything: the design, the manufacturing, and then I launched the product on Kickstarter in 2021."

She chose Kickstarter not just for funding, but for validation. "I wanted to see how people would respond," she says. The campaign was successfully funded, which led to securing a manufacturer and officially launching the TeaVoila website. Although production takes place in China—where more than 90% of the world's tea is grown—Gerami's long-term vision is to bring manufacturing to St. Louis.

Building on momentum from the Kickstarter campaign, TeaVoila set out to redefine the tea experience with a premium, planet-friendly beverage served in a patented, fully compostable bamboo fiber cup—infuser included. At the base of each cup rests organic loose-leaf tea, cradled in a built-in basket that locks in the leaves and keeps your drink free of residue.

Just add hot water and you can enjoy up to three flavorful refills without losing the tea's rich aroma or taste—brewing right in the cup.

From the cup and lid to the tea bag, outer box, and even the adhesive, every element of TeaVoila's packaging is plastic-free, glue-free, and designed to return to the earth. "I don't use tape, I don't use plastic," notes Gerami. "Everything, down to the smallest detail, is made to be fully compostable."

Beyond its sustainable design, TeaVoila curates an exquisite range of organic loose-leaf teas—green, black, jasmine, oolong, and white—alongside its signature caffeine-free herbal blend crafted to calm the senses and restore balance.

"The herbal tea was inspired by students and travelers dealing with stress and anxiety," she says. "It's a thoughtful combination of calming herbs—perfect for people constantly on the move."

TeaVoila's alignment with travel and wellness made it a perfect fit for the Airport Minority Advisory Council (AMAC) Runway to Success Pitch Competition, held at St. Louis Lambert International Airport (STL) in May.

The Shark Tank-style event gives entrepreneurs a chance to break into the competitive world of airport concessions. "I jumped in as soon as I heard about it," Gerami shares. "I had a table, displayed my products, and was selected as a finalist to advance to the national competition at the Annual AMAC Airport Business Conference in New Orleans in July."

Even though she didn't move on to the final four in New Orleans, the experience was a win. "One of the judges—the owner of Midtown Café, a premium coffee and tea concession with two locations at STL—was so impressed by TeaVoila that he approached me directly after the event."

"He said, 'I'm going to order your product,'" Gerami says. That conversation led to a deal. TeaVoila is now preparing to launch at Midtown Café, a high-end concession known for its artisanal brews and curated offerings at STL. The café's commitment to quality and craft makes it a natural fit for TeaVoila's eco-conscious, ready-to-steep blends.

TeaVoila is poised to be a welcome addition at STL—and at airports worldwide—where reducing waste is an increasing priority. Each year, an estimated 50 billion takeaway cups end up in U.S. landfills, a staggering statistic that highlights the urgent need to rethink how beverages are served. TeaVoila is leading that charge with a steadfast commitment to eco-conscious design and a zero-waste philosophy.

"Our product is free of forever chemicals, fully compostable, and aligned with a zero-waste approach," says Gerami. "We don't want to be part of the waste problem. Our product goes back to nature and leaves no carbon footprint."

Gerami brings a diverse background to her business, combining a master's degree in finance with experience in real estate, advertising, teaching, and launching a skincare line on Amazon. Her husband, who has two decades of manufacturing experience, serves as a key consultant, while a dedicated digital marketing team helps amplify the brand's presence and reach.

Her message to aspiring entrepreneurs: "Your mindset is everything. Every day brings a challenge. But I always go back to my why. Stay positive. Look at the cup half full—literally."