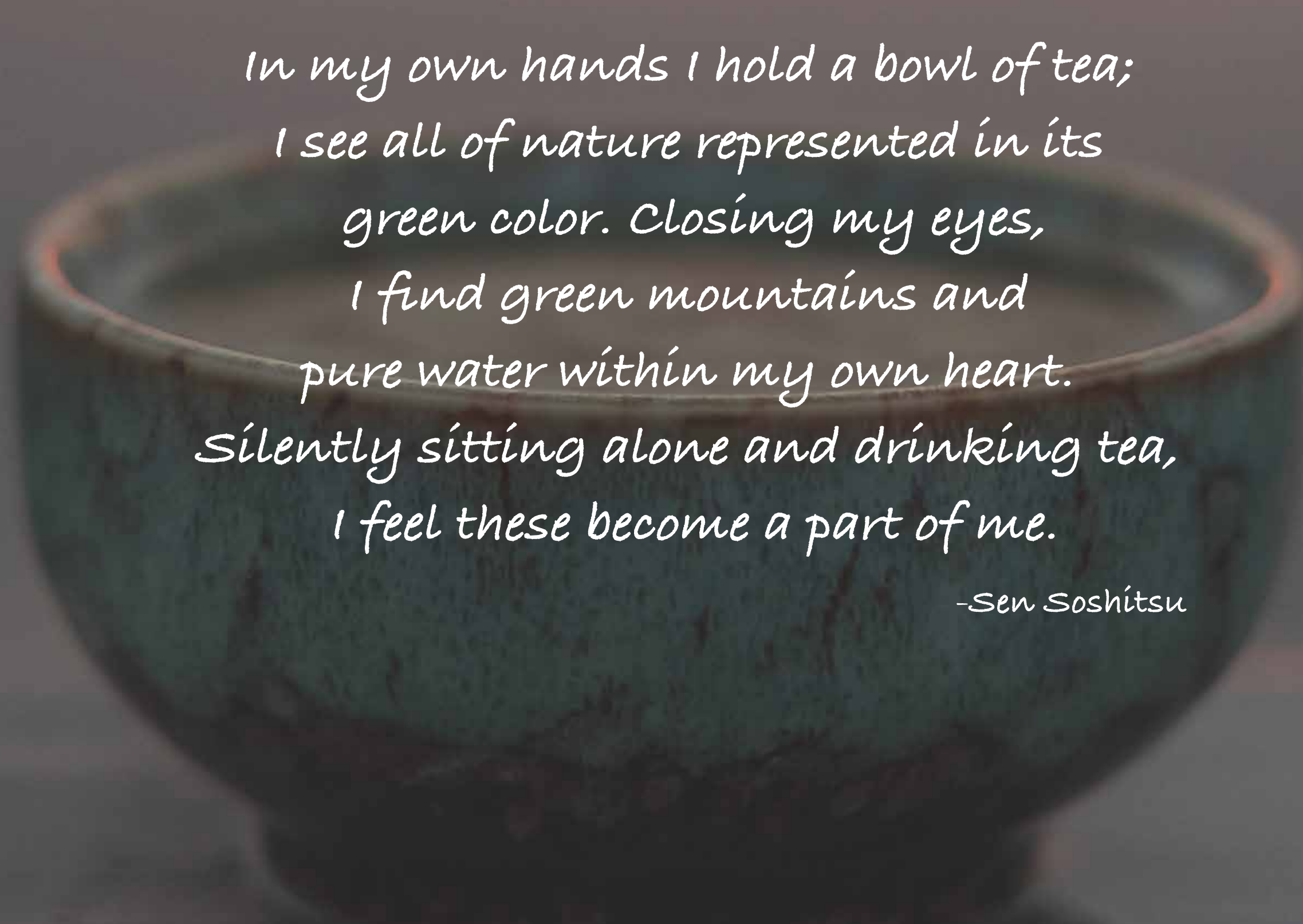


# Finding Your Cup of Tea

A Guide to Navigating the World of Tea



Heather Kelly Lavoie



In my own hands I hold a bowl of tea;  
I see all of nature represented in its  
green color. Closing my eyes,  
I find green mountains and  
pure water within my own heart.  
Silently sitting alone and drinking tea,  
I feel these become a part of me.

-Sen Soshitsu

To Ava, with much love

## Acknowledgements if any?

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Tea is not meant to be complicated.

It all started in China when tea leaves accidentally fell into boiling water and thousands of years later, here we are.

Okay, I admit that might be oversimplifying it, but still, there is pure, unpretentious beauty in enjoying a cup of tea. Tea drinkers share a universal connection to this enjoyment, yet you can make it your own unique experience. It comes down to finding your cup of tea.

Tea can be prepared formally or as an everyday occasion. You can use loose leaf or a tea bag. You can make it a spiritual routine or have it anywhere, for any reason or no reason at all. Don't let the traditions or customs stop you from taking the first steps in exploring tea and being able to make it your own journey.

It is estimated that there are over 3,000 choices of tea not even including herbals. I have been drinking tea for more than twenty years, and I have yet to come close to trying all of them. The world of tea can offer something for everyone, depending on your mood, taste, and health goals. A tea can be unique to a region, culture, process, and even climate, giving them each a specific flavor, and it can be prepared hot, cold and a range of strengths, giving the tea drinker many variations to accommodate their taste preferences.

The options can seem endless, but you don't have to navigate it alone. Consider this book a compass to finding your cup of tea.

By exploring the world of tea, it can become your story and a part of your tradition. I want you to feel empowered to enjoy tea your way.

I don't consider myself a formal tea drinker, not that I don't enjoy a special occasion, but I am more of an expert in casual tea. I can appreciate the beauty and taste of a quality tea, however, I do not believe tea must be experienced in only one way to be a part of my life. As I was growing up, my family did not drink tea much, except for an occasional summer iced tea which I never took to at that time.

So, my own tea story started in college as I began using herbals in tea bags to help with my allergies. It worked very well. It took care of my sniffles in the morning without giving me the drowsiness of medication.

A few years later, I worked with a family who introduced me to the English tradition of afternoon tea with a delicious blended black tea. Sarah served it in beautiful teacups and teapots with cream and sugar on a tray. She turned afternoon tea with me into a time for relaxing and catching up on the events of the day. When weather permitted, we looked forward to sitting in the garden, talking, sharing, and sipping tea. To this day, I still look forward to enjoying those moments when I visit.

As life sometimes happens, I moved to the West Coast and started a new adventure. Missing my afternoon tea with Sarah, I kept my eyes open for a flavorsome tea I could enjoy in my new home. I was not confident enough yet to use a teapot or loose tea, so I searched for quality tea bags. Once new flavors and whole leaf in tea bags became available, I started habitually drinking tea in the morning, and it became my quiet time to think, relax, and prepare for the day.

When I opened a pottery shop in 2006 and my children were still young, my mornings went from busy to crazy. I was trying to get out of the door and have my tea with me! Also, while making my tea, it was never pleasant going to the garbage to dispose of the tea bag, or having it over-steep on my way to work. I knew there could be a better way. I wanted the convenience that is afforded the coffee drinker but for my tea.

Through much experimenting and testing at my shop and home, I designed and patented the Haven Tea Lid. It is a lid that is used with a tea bag or sachet. It holds the tea bag while steeping. Then, when steeped, it provides a place to store the tea bag without having to find a garbage. It also helps the tea leaves to open more fully by suspending the tea bag in the center of the cup, therefore, allowing

for a better-tasting tea. It was this invention that made me have more conversations with people about drinking tea and asking how they enjoyed their tea. I also realized many people were wanting to learn more about tea, too.

As my daughter Ava grew older, chamomile tea (tisane) was a "go-to" for the end of a long, stressful day in high school. Eventually, she ventured into trying different types of tea, and we both enjoyed finding new flavors. Helping my daughter find new teas gave me the confidence to explore loose tea, and I am still exploring today. I am glad to say that Ava and I share a love for tea. It is genuinely our happiness in a cup.

Over the years, I have learned as much as I could about tea. Drawn to the flavors and health benefits more than its formality, it has become my passion in life to share my love for tea with people I meet.

Then when I saw that my daughter was hesitant to explore different teas on her own as I first did years ago, I looked for a beginners guide to tea, and I could not find one that addressed the questions she had. So, I decided if I could not find one, I will write one. I knew a book that she could reference and have some basics explained would be a great support in her journey, and it could be used by other beginner tea enthusiasts who wanted more tea in their life.

There is much to discuss from tea accessories to tea flavors, and of course, making that elusive perfect cup of tea. Finding Your Cup of Tea is written mostly as a practical guide to understanding tea and how to make it with tips and inspiration. As a way to make this guide your own, there is also a note section for each tea type where you can record impressions, tips, or variations you'd like to explore.

Being passionate about having tea as a part of my life, I want to share the first steps to help you bring this enjoyment into your life as well.

# Info needed

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*Tea began as a medicine  
and grew into a beverage.*

*-KAKUZO OKAKURA, Book of Tea (760AD-762AD)*



# Introduction to Tea

**To say tea originated in China is an understatement.**

The Chinese people were the first to make tea a part of their culture, politics, writings, and rituals. They studied its medicinal properties and developed steps to create different types of teas. In Tibet, and Northern India prior to 618 AD tea leaves were most likely being chewed medicinally. However, China was first to celebrate tea as a part of their culture during the Tang Dynasty, the Golden Age of Tea (618 - 907 AD). A popular Chinese story even dates Emperor Shen discovering tea by boiling its leaves in water in 2737 BC, but it cannot be verified, as there are no written records of it in history. It is certain to say that tea has been thoroughly embraced by the Chinese people for thousands of years.

The word tea originated from China as Dutch sailors translated the Chinese coastal languages' word *te`* (tay) for tea (tee). Today we use the word tea to describe its many forms. It can refer to the tea plant, the processed tea leaves, or the liquid produced by the steeped tea leaves. It's acceptable to call all of them tea. However, more accurately the tea plant is *Camellia Sinesis*, the processed finished leaves are loose tea, and steeped tea is called an infusion.

How and where tea is made determines its own unique flavor, aroma, and health benefits. Steeping the leaves releases the essential oils and polyphenols responsible for its health benefits, and allows you to experience its flavor and aroma. What has become your cup of tea is the direct expression of a tea master's highly revered skills in creating it. These skills were most likely passed down over generations to bring out the best flavors and health benefits.

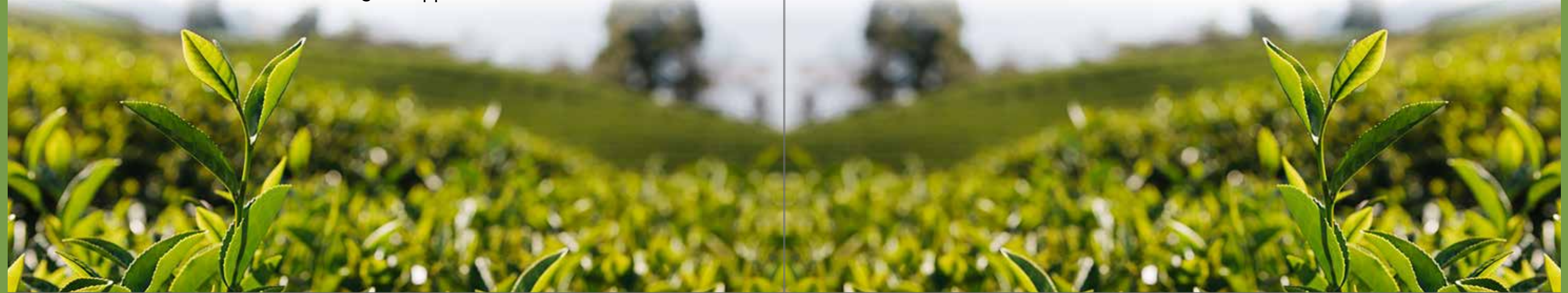
China has had thousands of years head-start on mastering the making of tea, but other regions around the world are now taking advantage of the knowledge and skills available. Tea is being grown in more countries than ever before. China is the largest supplier of tea, and respectively, India, Africa, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia are the next largest suppliers.

The tea plant was not cultivated outside of China before the 1800s, and it was through a thousand years of extensive trading that drinking tea became interwoven into many other languages, cultures, histories, and landscapes across the globe. Once countries had the tea plant in their possession, they still needed the knowledge and understanding to grow and create tea from tea leaves. It was the Chinese tea masters' eventual sharing of their cultivation and processing skills that growing and producing tea became successful. Today, tea is second only to water as the most consumed beverage in the world.

Tea is grown using both traditional and non-traditional methods to harvest and prepare tea for market. It can be made on a large scale for mass consumption or more familiarly known as the broken tea you find in tea bags. The traditional method is harvesting smaller batches of whole leaf tea which is less mechanical, for example, hand-picking the leaves. Each tea farm prepares tea that can be sold to companies, at auctions, or package their own tea for sale, or is a combination of these options.

With over 3000 varieties of tea available, you can choose teas that suit your taste and health benefits. Starting with the *Camellia sinensis* plant, step by step they are crafted to give a unique taste and benefits. Where the plant is grown to the final stage of creating a tea are factors that reflect in the teas appearance and flavors. There are 6 main tea types: green, black, white, oolong, fermented, and yellow tea. Each tea type is defined by what order and how the steps are completed. All the history, knowledge, experience and purpose behind making tea is yours to experience in your cup.

*Let the journey be yours.*



## Tea Plant

All tea types are made from the tea plant called **Camellia sinensis** (*come-eel-ya sin-en-sis*).

Sinensis is Latin for the word "China" since when it was first identified and named by English botanists in the 1800s it was only found in China. It was presumed that China was the only place that tea plant grew even though they did not have extensive scientific methods to determine this. It is, however, acceptable to accredit China with the discovery of tea as we know it today.

The tea plant is an evergreen with a shrub-like appearance. It has a shiny, bright, green serrated leaf. When left to grow naturally, the *Camellia sinensis* blossoms with a small white, fragrant flower. It can reach as tall as 30 to 60 feet (9 to 18 meters) high or more. They can live for thousands of years in the wild, and well cared for farmed tea plants can last hundreds of years.

For cultivation, flowers and fruit are discouraged to keep the leaf healthier for tea production, and pruning keeps the shrub at 3 to 6 feet high for fullness and easy plucking. Rainfall and acidic soil are needed for healthy growth. Preferring temperatures between 65°F to 77°F (18°C to 25°C), however, it has been known to survive temperatures as low as 0° F (-18°C). The cooler temperatures may cause the plant to grow slower or even become dormant. It takes about 2 years before it's mature enough for harvesting, and about 5 years for it to become a robust leaf producer. Ideally, only what is called the flush, or the tender, new shoots of the plant are picked which is surprisingly a small portion of the leaves on the tea plant. Depending on the climate, the flush happens twice a year in higher elevations to once a month in tropical, warmer regions.





### Jinxiu Tea Tree is 3200 years old.

The oldest and largest known cultivated tea tree is strictly protected and revered as an ancient tree in China's Southern Yunnan region. It is still harvested to make a puerh tea, but rarely and its tea is highly prized.

*There are two main tea plant varieties:*

**Camellia sinensis var. sinensis** from China

**Camellia sinensis var. assamica** from the Assam area of India.

The Chinese variety, **Camellia sinensis var. sinensis**, is preferred to make sweeter, lighter teas like green and white tea. However, this tea plant also can produce all the tea types such as a sweeter, smooth black tea that China is known for which is usually drunk without added milk or sugar, or a fermented tea like a puerh, or an oolong that has complex flavors and also a smooth taste. This tea plant has a smaller leaf size and tolerates colder temperatures. It mainly grows on mountain slopes in China, but given the right climate and soil, it can be cultivated in parts of Asia and the Darjeeling region of India and similar environments around the world.

**Camellia sinensis var. assamica** is known as the Assam tea plant or Indian tea plant. Discovered growing naturally in the Assam region of Northern India during the early 1800s, it was thought that the *Camellia sinensis var. sinensis*, the Chinese tea plant, had adapted over thousands of years into the *Camellia sinensis var. assamica*. Stories have been told that the Chinese tea plant had been first brought to India by Mongolian monks traveling over the Himalayan Mountains. However, where the Assam tea plant was first found, it wasn't a place that was ideal for growing the Chinese tea plant as the climate is more temperate with plenty of rain than that of the higher rocky mountains of China. Also, recent genetic testing of different Assam tea plant variations revealed that not all tea plants originated in China, and some are native to India. This is a significant revelation that has helped growers better understand farming practices needed to produce the best tea. Even though all tea types can be produced by this tea plant, it is ideal for producing a rich, bold black tea.

Some drinks are called a tea, but are actually an herbal or tisane because they are not made from the *Camellia sinensis* plant. They are made from other plants, herbs, or fruit. For example, rooibos (roy-bose) is referred to as a tea; however, it is made from the African Rooibos bush. Yerba mate (yer-ba ma-tay), also called a tea, but is made from a native South American plant. Chamomile (cam-mo-meal) is from the chamomile flower, and does not come from the *Camellia sinensis* plant, and therefore, is not truly a tea. They all can be very delicious, as well as rich in health benefits, and including them as part of your tea experience can be both pleasurable and beneficial.



A Thousand mountains  
will greet my departing friend,  
When the spring teas blossom again.  
With such breadth and wisdom,  
Serenely picking tea—  
Through morning mists  
Or crimson evening clouds—  
His solitary journey is my envy.  
We rendezvous at a remote mountain temple,  
Where we enjoy tea by a clear pebble fountain.  
In that silent night,  
Lit only by candlelight,  
I struck a marble bell—  
Its chime carrying me  
A hidden man

Deep into thoughts of ages past.

*"The Day I Saw Lu Yu off to Pick Tea"*  
in *The Classic of Tea* by Huangfu Zheng poem  
about Lu Yu going to pick tea in China (760-762 AD)



# Processing of Tea

As the morning sun rises over the high mountains of China streaming its light onto the rows of tea bushes, a skilled tea picker has started their day using a soft touch to pick the delicate specially selected tea leaves so not to bruise them. The day is long as they work until late afternoon and picking between 13 to 17 lbs. ( 5.9 - 7.7 kg.) of leaves a day. Once harvested, the tea leaves must be treated to create the final tea.

All tea plants can produce all tea types, but through many years of cultivation, certain plants, soils, and climates tend to produce a particular tea type better than others. The development of each tea type starts from choosing the species of tea plant to where and how the plant is grown to the final steps in treating the leaves. Like wine, the soil, climate, and how the grapes are processed and stored, are expressed in the its taste; these factors are also expressed in a tea.

The variations in the order or steps in harvesting, picking the leaves, or buds, to final treatments, you can see how each tea type is produced. It is a combination of science and art to develop each tea. Tea masters also have their techniques that make the many variations unique. Even though a white tea has less steps in processing, the techniques used to make a white tea can still as much skill as a complex processing of a puerh or oolong.

Knowing a little about what tea leaves go through for each step will show why each develops different tastes, shape, and color. For example, in general, the darker the final tea leaves, the more oxidized and more of a full-bodied taste, and lighter or greener the final tea leaves, the less oxidized and a greener or lighter taste.

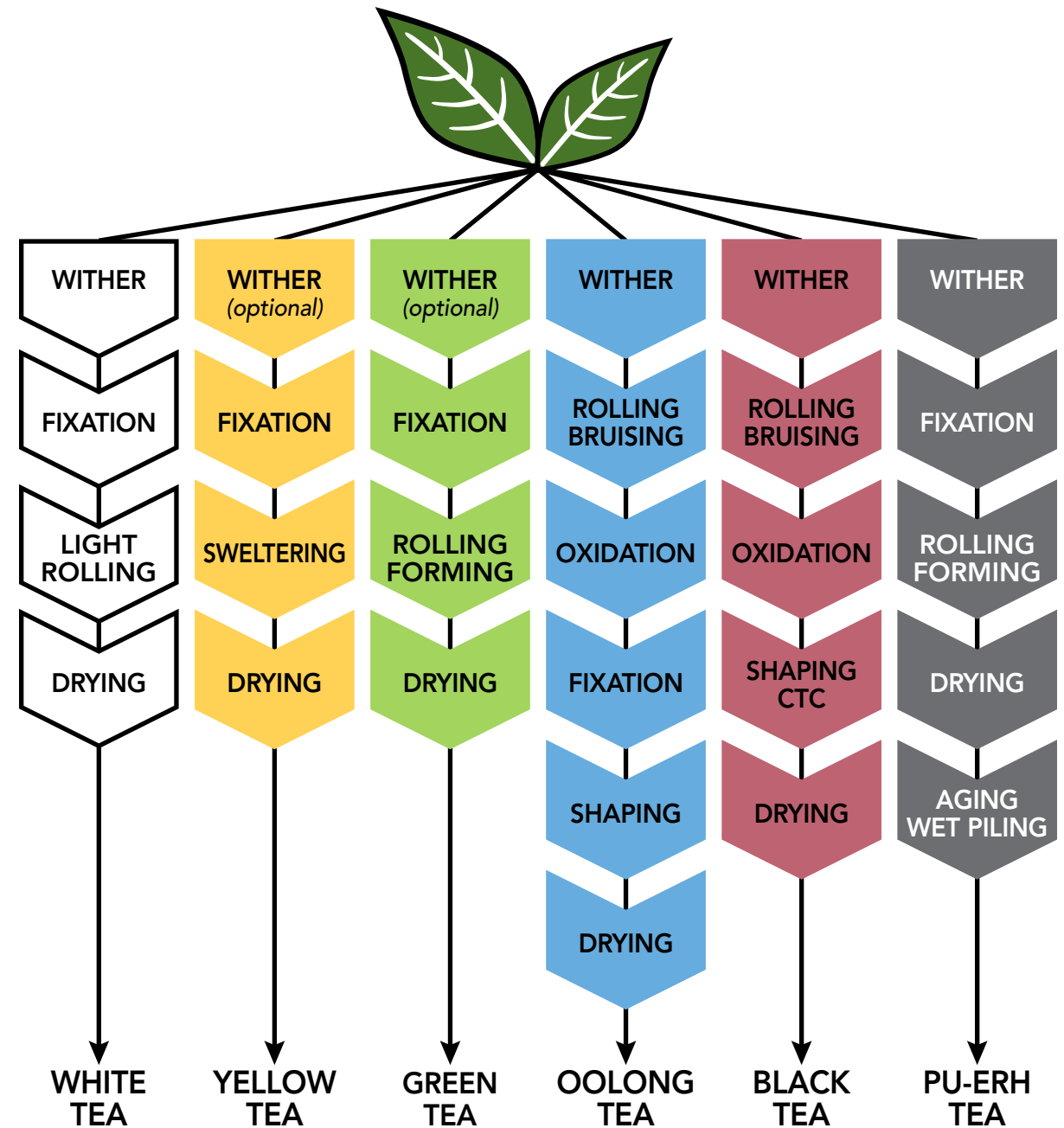
Since all types of tea, black, green, white, oolong, fermented, and yellow, are made from the same plant, each tea type is determined by how the tea leaves are processed. Each process can take many steps and considerations when creating a specific tea type.

**Factors include:**

1. The variety of tea plant chosen (sinensis or assamica, etc.).
2. What parts of the plant are picked or used, such as new leaves, buds, stems, and how it is picked: hand or mechanically picked?
3. The level of oxidation process (oxidation of the tea leaves ranging from "full" oxidation, partial oxidation to minimal no oxidation).
4. Technique used to process the leaves (steamed, pan-fried, roasted, fermented).
5. If flavored, what it's mixed (such as other herbs and spices, fragrances, and dried fruits).

The combinations and variations seem unlimited that can influence the development a tea. This is what makes tea complex, and why so many people can potentially discover a flavor they can enjoy.

Processing Chart



## Processing Lingo

**Plucking** is the action of picking tender tea shoots, buds, or leaves. There is an acquired understanding of when and how to choose the leaves for the highest quality tea. Most of the tea farmers practice manual plucking and harvesting, but mechanical plucking is practiced as well especially with mass production. Plucking is the most labor intensive practice during tea processing consuming approximately fifty to sixty percent of the total labor requirement in tea field operations, and can be from twenty-five to thirty-five percent of the total cost of production.



Mechanical picking increases labor productivity, however, it affects how much a tea bush can produce and the quality of the final tea because it isn't possible to select which tea leaves are better for harvesting, it can have more broken or crushed leaves. Since non-selective mechanical harvesting isn't as careful as a person hand-picking, it can negatively affect the tea bush's leaf quality, and the taste of the tea. Technologic advances in the machinery has lessened the possible adverse effects of mechanical picking and is used today in some modern or mass producing tea farms.

**Withering** or **Wilting** is a part of the process of drying fresh leaves, either in specially designed rooms or in the open air. A small amount oxidation and dehydration occurs during this time with some chemical reactions occur, breaking down the tea leaf; all of which helps the tea leaves become more pliable and therefore, easier to work with.



**Oxidation** is a process of exposing the tea leaves to oxygen and creating a series of chemical reactions that results in the browning of them. Oxidation occurs naturally to some degree once the tea leaves are picked, however, during processing it is purposefully encouraged when they are laid out to dry, either in a controlled room or the open air. A chemical reaction occurs with its exposure to air making the leaves turn a reddish/brown to a dark brown color creating teas like black and the semi-oxidized oolong. Not all types of tea are oxidized to the same degree, and this is an essential part of determining the type of tea that is produced.

### OXIDATION CHART

Camellia Sinensis - the tea leaf

<b>WHITE TEA</b> wilted, unoxidized	<b>YELLOW TEA</b> unwilted, unoxidized, allowed to yellow	<b>GREEN TEA</b> unwilted, unoxidized	<b>OOLONG TEA</b> wilted, bruised partially oxidized	<b>BLACK TEA</b> wilted, crushed fully oxidized	<b>PU-ERH TEA</b> post fermented, and aged
<b>LESS</b>			<b>MORE</b>		

How long the leaf is oxidized changes a tea leaf from a green tea to black tea. Green and white teas are minimally oxidized and are treated to lessen naturally occurring oxidization. Whereas black tea is what is referred to as being fully oxidized even though some black teas are not as oxidized as others, they are by far the more oxidized tea type giving them a darker leaf appearance.

Stages of oxidation to produce Fermented Tea



**Fixation, Kill-Green or Drying's** purpose is to stop oxidative enzyme activity from the fermentation or oxidation processing. This is done by exposing the leaves to high levels of heat for a short amount of time, or moderately heating the leaves for 60 seconds or less.

*There are four common ways this can be done:*

1. **Baking:** This is when tea leaves are arranged in a thin layer on a conveyer belt where they are heated as they pass through an oven - similar to how a pizza oven works.
2. **Steaming:** This occurs when the tea leaves are rotated through a metal cylinder where they are contained and water-steamed. This process is the most effective in preserving the green color and vitamin content in the leaves for green teas.
3. **Pan-frying:** During pan-frying, tea leaves are tossed around in a dry, hot wok by hand, and the person, the tea processor, must fry them until they give back just the right amount of "bounce." The tea master's skill is shown with this process, as the leaves must not burn.
4. **Sun-drying:** This is when the tea leaves are laid out in a single layer exposed to sunlight.

**Rolling or shaping** is the process of twisting and breaking the tea leaves, releasing natural juices, making tea leaves look curled.

It activates the enzymes that play a part in initiating oxidation and fermentation. During this stage, damp tea leaves are rolled to be formed into wrinkled strips. It could be done by hand or using a rolling machine which causes the tea to wrap around itself. It causes some of the sap, essential oils, and juices inside the leaves to ooze out, which can enhance the taste of the tea.



**Crushing, cutting, and bruising** is an alternative process to rolling, which also releases the leaf's natural juices to start a small amount of natural fermentation and oxidation. The leaves are finely chopped instead of broken, producing a darker tea which can be brewed quickly.



**Sweltering or "sealed yellowing"** process is unique to yellow tea. Warm and damp tea leaves are allowed to be lightly heated in a closed container, which causes the green leaves to turn yellow. This removes much of the grassy smell and taste, leaving behind a pleasant mellow taste with all the health benefits of a less oxidized tea.

**Fermentation** is when the tea leaves are purposely exposed to microbes and has been allowed to ferment after the initial tea process, from days to several months to many years.

Some teas require additional **aging or curing**, a secondary fermentation, or baking to reach final results. For example, the difference between a green tea and a raw pu'erh is merely the drying method: green tea is dried with hot air dryer while raw pu'erh tea is dried by sunshine. Flavored teas or scented teas are manufactured in this stage by slowly absorbing any flavor and aroma around them. A quality scented tea will take at least 2 to 3 weeks to absorb the scent fully. Avoiding the time consuming slow absorption of aroma methods, makers also use a modern way of spraying the tea mixture with essential oils to give it an aroma.

## Additions to the Tea Process

Adding to tea has been culturally influenced over the centuries. It can be traced as far back as China's Tang Dynasty (618 - 907 AD) in which condensed tea was combined with long lao, a blend of herbs, which gave a strong aroma. Ginseng oolong was also documented during this era. It is an oolong that has a powdered ginseng (an herbal) coating. Even though long lao went out of style, ginseng oolong is still in production today. In the late Song Dynasty (960 - 1279AD) flower-scented teas were being prepared and enjoyed regularly, and not until the 1600s was it introduced to Europe through trading. A variety of flowers were used to scent teas like rose, orange flower, gardenia, osmanthus, and plum blossom, but jasmine were especially prized and made as tribute teas for emperors, and are usually gifts to dignitaries today.

Tea alone can have a variety of naturally occurring aromas and tastes, but different scents, inclusions, extracts, or flavorings can enhance your experience. During the final stages of processing, extracts or flavorings, scents, or a variety of natural dried fruits and herbs can be added to the final product. In the case of jasmine tea, it can even have its own processing.

### Scented Tea

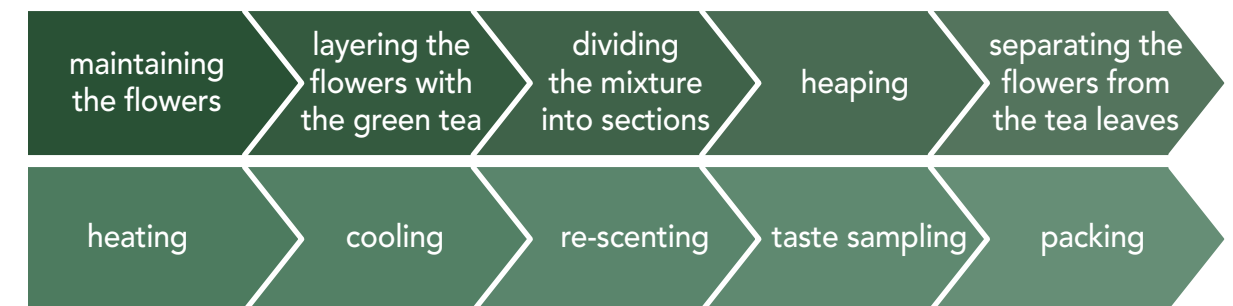
The term "scented" can refer to a specific type of tea and process. It is when the tea is allowed to naturally absorb a fragrance by proximately over hours of repeated exposure to the scent taking days, weeks, or even months to create. Even though other flavoring additives are aromatic, scented teas are usually associated with flowers and/or a process in which the tea absorbs a scent that is not in liquid form that is sprayed to adhere to the tea.

It can be confusing when buying teas to determine whether they are scented or had extracts or flavorings sprayed on as the description may not be specific enough to let us know. Asking and reading as much as possible can help determine which you are purchasing. Even the price may reflect what kind of tea you are purchasing as traditionally prepared jasmine scented teas can be at a much higher cost. However, though the tea may be flavored in different ways, it still may be a good tasting tea.

The best jasmine teas are traditionally made by using a specially prepared green tea from the spring harvest, but white, black or oolong preparations can also be used as well. This "unfinished" tea can best absorb the fragrance from the jasmine petals and is stored in a cool place until the jasmine blossoms in the summer. The flavor of these flowers is absorbed by the moist tea leaves, giving a slightly flavored and fragrant cup of tea. If tea is harvested close to the time the flowers blossom, the tea grade might not be as high, but it doesn't need to be put into cold storage.

When the jasmine petals are picked, they inter-placed with the tea. They can lay for hours, or for however long the tea master decides, and then most or all petals are removed because they have a shorter shelf life than the tea. Jasmine tea with petals left in the finished tea is not as prized and are considered a lower quality tea. The process of scenting can be repeated several times over weeks, and this re-scenting produces a higher quality jasmine tea. It takes a highly skilled tea master to scent jasmine tea from knowing when to pick the jasmine petals to the right balance of jasmine to tea ratio.

*The process is as follows:* Preparing the green tea prior to scenting



There are other variations of making even jasmine teas with each batch taking on its own signature quality, scent strength, and the tea masters own adaptations. However, jasmine is not the only scented tea. Lapsang



Souchong is a tea that which is scented with pine smoke, and there are other floral teas like rose, and hibiscus that are enjoyed. To make these teas, it is prepared to its final tea type, then is allowed to absorb the fragrance which may take weeks to complete.



**Extracts**

Extracts are liquids made by extracting the essential oils from naturally derived substances like leaves, fruits, or blossoms, roots, seeds, etc. They are sprayed over the dry final tea to be absorbed. Lemon, orange, bergamot, and vanilla bean are popular extracts. Bergamot is traditionally used in Earl Grey, a popular black tea, either as an extract, or a combination of extract and inclusions. It is a citrus fruit grown in the Mediterranean, and the rind of the green or yellow fruit can be pressed for oil. Like most essential oils, it can be expensive.

**Flavorings**

Flavorings can be what is called nature-identical flavors which is different from artificial flavors which are made from products that were not intended for human consumption. Due to the cost of making natural flavorings, natural-identical flavorings were developed. They are made by creating a chemically equivalent version from naturally occurring less expensive consumable foods. They do not contain any artificial flavorings. They are not only less expensive, but are more stable when added to food or tea.

**Inclusions**

Inclusions in tea are dried fruit or flower petals added for flavor, aroma or just to be visually pleasing. They can also enhance the tea flavor and health benefits depending on what is added. An example is black tea with ginger. The ginger can enhance health benefits as well as give the tea a warm, spicy flavor.

Fruits and herbs already added to tea can affect a tea's aroma and taste, like citrus and mint, so judging by aroma can be only determined by the added inclusions and/or flavorings. An excellent tea master will custom blend flavorings to complement a tea type.

Chai is a perfect example of adding ingredients fresh or dried. Dried flavoring method is ideal for foods that maintain their natural flavors after being dehydrated. Making chai is about combining spices like cardamom, clove, and black pepper. It can be purchased pre-mixed, or you can make a chai adding your own spices to a tea base. The variations are almost endless with chai, giving each varying combination a signature taste.



White Tea with rose petals

**GABA Tea Process:**

GABA (gamma-aminobutyric acid) Tea is made by treating tea leaves to a controlled nitrogen environment with no oxygen to enhance the tea's chemical composition of gamma-aminobutyric. It can either happen naturally with a lower amount of GABA, or through a developed process that increases the amount of GABA. The developed process replaces the oxidation step that uses heat with a high-nitrogen, oxygen-free environment. By doing so, it increases the concentration of gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA). Some teas are called GABA tea when they are treated with this process. GABA is recognized to boost moods or have a calming, relaxing effect on the nervous system. Oolong naturally has a higher amount of GABA than the other tea types.

**GABA OOLONG** All teas have naturally occurring gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA) known for having a calming effect on the nervous system. GABA Oolongs have a higher amount of GABA because it adapted its harvesting process, and once picked, it treated with nitrogen to keep as much GABA in the tea leaves as possible. About two weeks prior to plucking, a GABA oolong leaves are partially shaded, which encourages more of glutamic acid. Then, during the oxidation-phase, all oxygen is replaced with nitrogen gas, whose presence causes the glutamic acid to be converted to gamma-aminobutyric acid or GABA.



**Fair Trade Certification:**

From the planting to the processing of tea leaves occurs at the tea farms or factories which can employ many people in rural, low-income communities in countries around the world. To make sure that they have a fair wage, and there is access to the basics in life, many tea purchasers are sourcing their tea from Fair Labor or Fair Trade certified tea farms. Fair Trade gives a guarantee that farmworkers are paid a fair wage and empowers them to lift themselves out of poverty by investing in their farms and communities.

You can look for a Fair Trade symbol on the tea you are purchasing, or you can ask the tea shop if they source their tea from tea farms using the Fair Trade certification.



If a tea does not have the Fair Trade symbol, it doesn't necessarily mean it isn't well-sourced. Some of the UK and American corporations and retailers are participating in the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) and also the Tea Sourcing Partnership (TSP). Certification is a start in the right direction, and because auditing tea farms are a challenge, there will always be exceptions. However, the movement is bringing awareness and showing progress.



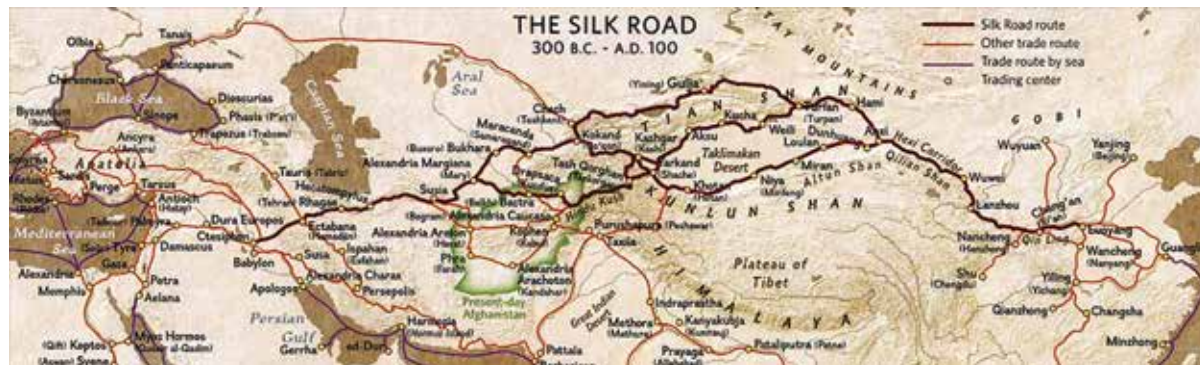
*I am Chinese.  
Tea is in my very bones.*  
- KIT CHOW, All the Tea in China

# A Snippet of Tea History

The history of tea is a fascinating one, full of traditions, culture, and stories spanning thousands of years. As a universal drink, its influence on the world is indeed comprehensive. Tea has been and still is interpreted and studied as a form of art, philosophy, spirituality, culture, and in trade, economics, traditions, and sociology.

Ancient Chinese lore tells of how tea was serendipitously discovered as early as 2737 BC when tea leaves fell into Chinese Emperor Shen Nung's bowl of boiling water while sitting outside. He was known as a ruler who had a scientific approach towards life so when he liked what he was tasting, he researched the properties of the tea leaves and discovered its medicinal benefits. There are no written record of this occurring, and it can take on mythical elements. However, we do know tea has been enjoyed and appreciated for its medicinal properties and taste for a very long time in China.

The history of tea dates to the BC era. It was first recorded as the word jia in the Erh Ya, a Chinese dictionary, published around 350 BC. Back then, tea was not what we think of it today, as it was made by directly boiling the tea leaves in water. The drying of tea leaves was referenced around 400 AD even though they could have been used many years before dry. Trading dry tea leaves was seen in the following years. Recently, archeological excavations unearthed tea storage containers in tombs dating from the Han dynasty 206 BC - 220 AD. However, it wasn't until the Tang dynasty (618-906 AD), that tea became truly celebrated national drink of China.



Tea was shared outside of China with trading along the Silk Trade Routes as early as 479 AD. In the ninth century, Europeans, along with the Arabs referenced tea, but there were no documented ordering of it during its trading interactions with China. Marco Polo (1254-1324 AD) mentions his discovery of drinking tea in his travel writings about the East. It wasn't until 1610 that the earliest confirmation of commercial trading of tea in Europe was recorded as a cargo listing with the Dutch East India Company while engaging in commerce with Japan and China.

Tea was eventually not only used as a trading product, but also politically as a precious gift of goodwill symbolizing the best of life. Countries like England, Russia, and Morocco, were formally introduced to tea through gifts or as part of dowries, and therefore, setting tea as a valuable item and a "must-have" for the wealthy.

By the 1700s in Europe, it developed into a highly sought-after trading commodity, but due to its high prices and limited quantities, it was enjoyed mostly by the wealthy. In the early 1800s, it had only grown more popular and was becoming a staple in people's lives. This increased demand for tea motivated the East India Company, a large English trading company, to gain more control of tea and its profits. Still, the knowledge of how to grow and process tea remained a mystery to people outside of China. The Chinese processing secrets were well kept from outsiders successfully for thousands of years because of its cultural and trading value. It was so valuable it was used as a trade currency along the routes.

A few people did try to infiltrate China's tea farms and steal the tea plant to discover its secrets. In 1845, one known person succeeded in infiltrating and stealing the tea plant, Robert Fortune. He was a Scottish botanist and plant hunter hired by the East India Company. The few Chinese tea plants that survived the trip back to India and England did not thrive and produce good tasting tea. However, everything they did learn helped a few years later to cultivate the wild tea found growing in India, and eventually, they succeed in harvesting the *Camellia sinensis* var. *assamica* or Indian tea plant.

At first, the tea farms with the native Indian tea plant were struggling to mass-produce and be profitable as they did not have the experience of growing tea. With Robert Fortune's translation of Chinese knowledge combined with the skilled Chinese tea farmers, he brought back with him, they improved the farming techniques in India, and thus, eventually bettering the overall tea quality and quantity of production to become economically viable.

The continued economic pressure to develop a profitable crop in the mid-1800s drove the British East India Company invest more into tea farms. They kept experimenting with both the Chinese tea plant and the wild Indian tea plant. However, it was a little too late for the British East India Company to benefit from the Indian tea plant's eventual success. Financially, the British East India Company was in disarray and was taken control of by the British government and dissolved by 1874.

The tea plant's success in India went on to make it much more economical and efficient than importing from China. Tea became available to almost everyone in England, not just the wealthy. China and the British East India Trading Company's monopoly of tea was broken, making tea more accessible to all.

# Tea History Timeline

- 2737** Chinese lore tells of how tea was discovered by Emperor Shen Nung.
- 350** Erh Ya, a Chinese dictionary, references tea for the first time.
- BC 188 - 141** Tea found in China during an burial archeological site dated during the Han dynasty.
- 400** Green tea processing steps are developed.
- 479** Tea was bartered with the Turkish traders along the Mongolian border. It is speculated that fermented teas were developed to trade at this time.
- 593** Buddhism and tea become part of life in Japan. Japanese monks study in China and take tea seeds and leaves home.
- 618** Tang Dynasty (618 - 906 AD), the Golden Age of Tea in China, tea is accepted as the national drink. Caravans carried tea along the Silk Road trading with Turkey, India and Russia.
- 760** Ch'a Ching or Tea Classic was written about tea elevating drinking and tea to an art form in China.
- 725-760** Tea was given its own character.
- AD 760** Ch'a Ching or Tea Classic was written about tea elevating drinking and preparing tea to an art form in China.
- 804-806** In one of two stories of how tea was brought to the monastery gardens in Japan, Dengyo Daishi, a Buddhist monk, brought seeds back with him after visiting China. The tea was popular to help concentration during meditation. The other story told credits the Buddhist priest, Yeisei, to bringing it back to Japan as well.
- 960-1269** Scented teas were developed, but did not become popular until trading increased from 1644 to 1912 AD
- 1600-1644** Black tea was developed by Chinese tea producers.
- 1606-1610** Dutch and Portuguese brought tea commercially to Europe while trading with China.
- 1638** Tea was gifted to Russian Tsar Michael I from China and it was at first rejected not realizing what it was, then accepted when it was explained how good the tea leaves were.
- 1650** Early Dutch settlers brought tea to America. This small settlement consumed more tea than all of Britain at the time.

- 1657** England sold its first tea at Garraway's Coffee House in London as a "China Drink" called Tcha, Tay or Tee. Mostly men went to the coffee houses and ordered it. It was a popular choice.
- 1662** Portuguese princess Catherine of Braganza dowry included tea when marrying England's Charles II. Tea became the fashion.
- 1664** East India Company brought a 100 lbs of tea to Great Britain.
- 1689** A formal trade agreement with Russia was paired with Russia's new taste for tea. Caravans were established, and a smokey black tea that is called Russian Caravan came from this route.
- 1706** Thomas Twining open the first tea shop at 216 Strand, London and still still is open today.
- 1773** The Boston Tea Party occurred December 16, 1773. American colonists protest high taxes to England on tea by dumping it in the Boston Harbor. This was one of the factors that led to the American Revolutionary War.
- 1784** Britain dramatically cut the taxes on tea and tea became more affordable.
- 1800** Anna the 7th Duchess of Bedford created Afternoon Tea when she was hungry between lunch and a late dinner by taking a pot of tea and a light snack.
- 1823** A native tea bush was found growing in Assam, India, while under British rule.
- 1839** Tea plantations in India were established with this newly discovered tea bush resulting in the breaking up the Chinese tea trade monopoly.
- 1843** The innovative clipper sail boat was launched and it cut the journey to China in more than half, from 12 - 15 months to 3 - 4 months, creating more competition in the tea trade. The Cutty Sark is the only intact clipper today. It is docked in South Australia for preservation.
- 1904** A United States Tea plantation owner, Richard Blechynden, sparked the ice tea rage made with black tea at the St. Louis World's Fair when he added ice to his hot tea and it sold out to the thirsty crowds.
- 1908** The first commercially developed tea bag was used in the United States by business man Thomas Sullivan. Even though it has had many adaptations since then, it is a very popular way to enjoy tea even today.
- Today** Tea is the most widely consumed beverage in the world and is second only to water!

# Pronouncing Tea



# Pronouncing Tea

# Pronounce Tea Around the World

*A cup of tea is like holding the world in your hands.*

Language	Country	Pronunciation
African	Africa	Chai, Tee
Arabic	Arabia	Shay, Chai
Chinese	China	Té Cha Chá
Croatian	Croatia	Caj (pronounced ch-eye)
Danish	Denmark	Te, The
Dutch	Netherlands	Thee
English	England	Tea
Finnish	Finland	Tee
French	France	Le Thé
German	Germany	Der Tee
Hungarian	Hungary	Tea
Iran	Iran	Chai
Irish	Ireland	Tae
Italian	Italy	Té
Japanese	Japan	O-Cha
Korea	Korea	Cha
Latvian	Latvia	Teja (pronounced tay-ya)
Malay	Malaysia	Teh (pronounced "tay"), C ya (pronounced Ch-eye-uh)
Norwegian	Norway	Te
Polish	Poland	Herbata
Portuguese	Portugal	Cha (pronounced 'shah')
Russian	Russia	Chay (pronounced ch-ayy)
Spain	Spain	El Té
Sri Lanka	Sri Lanka	Thé
Swedish	Sweden	Té (pronounced tee-uh)
Taiwanese	Taiwan	De
Thai	Thailand	Chah, Chah Yen refers to Iced Tea
Turkish	Turkey	Chay (pronounced ch-eye)
United States	United States	Tea
Vietnamese	North Vietnam	Che
Vietnamese	South Vietnam	Tra (sometimes pronounced Cha or Ja)

The pronunciation for tea varies across the globe. It is a reflection of the history of tea's journey to each country and tea's history and adapting to cultures.

To simplify saying tea in all the countries and instead of trying to memorize all the variations, you can focus on the words: Cha, Chai, Tea, Té and Te. All of these varia-

Interestingly, countries where tea was imported by ship to Europe tend to pronounce te as tea, and countries where tea was imported along the ancient trading routes, it's more likely to be pronounced as cha.

**Cha:** The word cha can be pronounced with a "ch" sound, like "ch-ah" in Cantonese, Tibetan, Korean, Sinhalese, and Bengali.

A softer "shah" sound with the "sh - ah" is a rising tone in Somali, North Vietnamese and Thai.

**Chai:** Chai is most recognizable in Hindi language, it is used in many other languages, but could have a variation in spelling. Other languages include:

Arabic, Macedonian, Bulgarian, Russian, Persian, Slovenian, Turkish, Slovak, Ukrainian, Greek, Romanian, Swahili, Czech, and Croatian.

**Tea, Tee, Thé, Té, Te, Teh:** Universally understood as the word used for tea, and pronounced similarly to tea, tee or "tay" with a variation on spelling, is used in most countries:

Dutch	Hungarian	German	Finnish
French	Icelandic	Italian	Armenian
Welsh	Malay	English	Indonesian
Spanish			

## India

Even though we associate the word Chai with India, India uses different words for tea. As there are as many recipes for Chai related to the region, there are different words used for it.

Region	Tea Name
Bengalis	Cha
Guiratis	Chiya
Kannada	Chaha
Malaylam	Chaya
Oriya	Cha
Tamil	Theneer
Telug near Nepali	Cheeya

# Tea Around the World

*A cup of tea is like holding  
the world in your hands.*



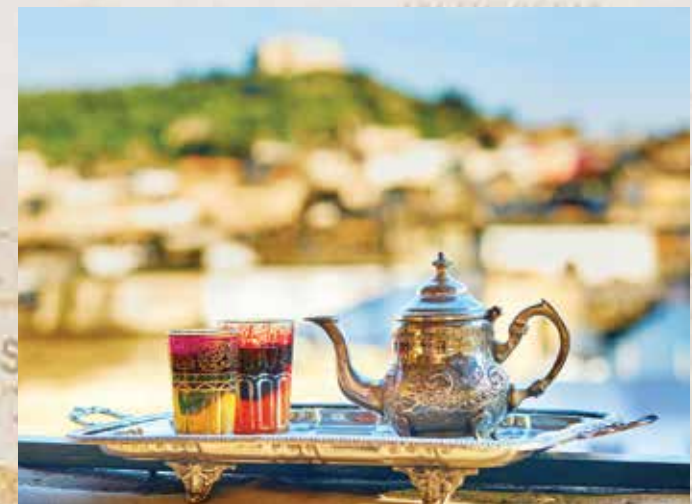
photo by Kira auf der Heide

Drinking tea is a tradition dating back thousands of years in China, and over time, tea has spread around the world adapting along the journey. Tea can be very unique to a culture, and give a national sense of pride in many countries, yet they all share the bond of enjoying tea as part of their lives. It is a universal symbolism of peace and hospitality.

*Here is a sampling of tastes of tea around the globe:*

## **MOROCCO**

In Morocco, drinking together is welcoming you like family. A mix of mint, Chinese Gunpowder green tea leaves, and a generous serving of sugar creates a Moroccan Mint tea called Touareg tea or Maghrebi. As tea, water, mint, and sugar blend to make this delicious sweet tea, the people, too, come together and share tea, life and make memories.



After preparing the tea, mint and sugar and with the teapot held up high, it is poured into delicately etched colorful glasses and is served two to three times to guests. Each time the flavor and strength vary slightly. The first pours of tea can be strong. As soon as they are poured, tea is made again by refilling the pot, adding more mint to boil again. The infused mint of the second steeping makes the tea lighter and sweeter. In some places, like in the Sahara, even a third pot of tea will be brewed from the same initial pot but adding more tea leaves and mint.

Drinking tea in Morocco is not something that is to be done in a rush, but it's meant to be enjoyed slowly to let this delicious tea refresh you and savor the friends and family experience.



## INDIA



A country rich in culture and traditions, India is also a large producer and consumer of tea and is known for their Masala Chai (ch-eye). Chai is more than a drink, it is an expression of culture and heritage. Different regions of India and families can have their unique recipe variations, however, most blends are made mixing black tea with spices like cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, cloves, cardamom, and pepper. This spicy tea mixture is such an essential part of everyday life that it is in most homes, and offered for sale on nearly every street corner, and taken on the go.

Vendors, called Chai Wallahs, work at chai stands that are often family businesses many generations old. Traditionally, they sell their brew in small clay cups made locally. Some locals consider the dust from the pottery cups to be a necessary ingredient for the authentic taste of this delicious national drink.



## TIBET

**Butter and tea? Yes!**

Hospitality includes this traditional salty butter tea of Tibet called Po-cha or Butter Tea. With a warm yellowish color, it has the consistency of soup and is served in a bowl. Po-cha is made by breaking off a piece of a Pemagul black tea brick and boiling it for hours, then milk, salt, and yak butter are added and churned together.

In this mostly nomadic country, it is a valuable offering since butter is a rare item. People living near farms or populated towns also use it for special occasions and guests, but it is more available and not as costly.

A good host will keep refilling the bowl to the brim again and again until it's time to leave. Then at that time, as a polite guest, you will drain what's left in the bowl. This tea is warming and strengthening in the high-altitudes and cold climates, but no matter where in Tibet, it is a gracious treat.



**CHINA**

The traditional Chinese tea ceremony, Gongfu (gong-foo) Tea is an incredibly detailed process, down to the elaborate designs on the small pot and cups. Some people think it is a type of tea, but it's actually the preparation, brewing, and serving tea.

Gungfu translates to "making tea with skill," and this means making the best possible tasting tea with care and attention while escaping the pressures of life by being in the moment enjoying the beauty of tea. It can be a very detailed ceremony combining courtesies with specific items.

The ritual may involve a teacup, strainers, tongs, tea towels, a brewing tray, and "scent" cups, which are used only to smell the tea, not drink, drinking cups, and most likely a commonly used tea such as oolong, pu'erh or a black tea. During the ceremony, water is used to rinse everything, and therefore, requires a brewing tray. A brewing tray is a slatted tray for the water to drain into, and the main body of the tray holds the water until it can be properly discarded after the ceremony.

The host may offer the guest to smell the leaves before brewing. This is just the first of many steps. For example, warming the cups with the tea's first brewing, it is discarded is done before the tea is served to the guest. The second brew is for drinking, and the cups are arranged in a circle, pouring from high in one continuous motion, around and around until each cup is full. No matter the step that is occurring, it is done mindfully and with purpose.

Guests are expected to cradle their cup in both hands, and sip slowly and savor the flavor, and then continue to carefully hold the empty cup to relish in the aroma after the tea is gone. This consciousness of the moment with your tea is an artistic expression to bring you to a better awareness of enjoying not only tea but life.

**JAPAN**

This island nation has highly elaborate tea ceremonies like Chanoyu, Sado, or Ocha. Green tea, specifically Matcha green tea, is the central element of the tea ceremonies. They have a Zen-inspired simplicity with the emphasis on etiquette and spirituality. It is not just about drinking the tea, but is about aesthetics and preparing a bowl of tea from one's heart. The movements of the brewer are carefully chosen with care. Each is done with consideration from the viewpoint of the guest being served. The ceremony includes everything from the preparation of the home to how guests are invited into it, the order in which utensils are brought into the room, to the cleaning and warming of these tools, the actual brewing and drinking, and the cleanup.

During the ceremony, each guest has specific duties and communications, and details vary depending on the time of day and season. Also, it is served with sweets to play against a high-quality Matcha's flavor.

Ultimately, Japanese tea ceremonies are about escaping into a peaceful, considerate time with tea finding harmony with life through respect, purity, and the tranquillity.



**MALAYSIA**

Even though there are many variations, Southeast Asia's creamy brew, Teh Tarik (tei tare-ik), contains black tea, sugar, and condensed milk. What makes the Teh Tarik or "Pulled Tea" special is how it's mixed. To achieve its distinct frothy texture, brewers pour the beverage back and forth between mugs, air cooling the tea as it flows from one glass to another. Mixing Teh Tarik being is an especially impressive skill as it's entertaining watching the tea be tossed between glasses back and forth without losing a drop! Showmanship has developed along with the tea's popularity, and there are even friendly competitions between brewers.

**THAILAND**

Chinese refugees fleeing during its Civil War in 1961 brought their strong traditions of drinking tea to Thailand. The blending of people and cultures created its unique tea traditions, and a distinctly amber-colored Thai Iced Tea or Cha Yen.

It can be a combination of a Ceylon or Assam tea, a strong black tea, with sugar, condensed milk, and spices like star anise, tamarind, and orange blossom, served over ice in a tall glass. Topping it off with evaporated milk or condensed milk creates an appealing ombre effect.

It's a sweet and spicy treat that's incredibly refreshing on hot days and complementary to Thailand's spicy cuisine.

**TURKEY**

Despite Turkey's long history with its distinctive coffee, as of 2016, Turkish people consume the most tea per capita. Trading with tea can be traced back as early as 400 BC, but the tradition of drinking tea or Cay (Chai) wasn't culturally common until the 1900s. Now tea is enjoyed throughout the day. It wouldn't be out of the ordinary to have several glasses of tea a day.



Traditionally, a strong, aromatic black tea is poured into a curved tulip shaped glass to present its beautiful color and, a saucer is used to help serve it. However, you can hold the glass by the top where it flares out to avoid burning your fingers to pick it up.

As a guest, your tea is refilled until you politely say you have had enough, and this could be signaled by putting your spoon across the top of the glass.

The tea is steeped in a double kettle system. The bottom kettle is for boiling water, and the top kettle is for steeping the tea. The tea taken directly from the steeping teapot on top is strong and can be diluted with the boiling water from the lower pot for individual preference. Milk is not used to take the astringency away, but lemon and sugar are acceptable. Unique to Turkey, beet sugar may be used.

Don't be surprised to not only be offered tea in a hostess' home but at businesses and public places. It is always a welcoming gesture of hospitality!



**TAIWAN**

A modern twist on tea is Taiwanese Bubble tea or Boba tea which was invented in Taichung in the 1980s (this is recent for tea). It is an iced tea and could be made with a black, green, jasmine or oolong tea base, but usually a black tea with added milk and syrup. Many variations are possible from changing the tea type and using milk, milk substitutes, adding flavored syrups, etc. However, it's signature small balls of tapioca, or sometimes called pearls, are a chewy starch extracted from the cassava root that looks like bubbles on the bottom of the cup gives this tea its name. It's become internationally popular with Bubble tea shops opening up across Asia, Europe, and the United States. A fun, tasty treat!

Taiwan is also known for its quality high mountain black teas. Even though they aren't one of the top 10 of tea-producing countries, 70% of its exports is this tea which reflects their high demand. Shan Cha is a highly recommended Taiwanese black tea produced from a tea plant variety that is indigenous to Taiwan. It has a deliciously fruity, malty flavor, and it's so rare that if you find some, it is worth the purchase!

**HONG KONG**

Pantyhose Tea sounds like a tea you might not want to drink, but it's named for the straining sock which resembles pantyhose. Be assured, a real pantyhose is not used to strain the tea and milk. Preparation includes a black tea, preferably Ceylon and sweet condensed milk, sugar to taste, and an arduous 10 to 20 minutes of constant and repetitive straining.



Sweet, creamy Pantyhose Tea, or also called Hong Kong Milk Tea, was created during late 19th century British colonization of Hong Kong when condensed or evaporated milk was imported, and since fresh milk isn't as readily available in Hong Kong and isn't a big part of Chinese foods, the rich, creamy condensed milk worked well.

Hong Kong is a fast-paced society, and most often, you can find this tea at popular tea-centered restaurants called Cha Chaan Teng. Many people from a variety of backgrounds come together cheerfully to enjoy tea with spirited conversation as they take a break from the pressures of life.



**IRAN**

In Iran, chaikhanehs or tea houses, are places of sharing tea and conversation. A long history with tea, chaikhanehs were established in response to the demand for tea in the 14th century when trading for tea from China along the Silk Road became easier. There are a variety of different chaikhanehs from ancient to newer designs. The most famous chaikhanehs is the Azari Tea House in Tehran with detailed architecture and traditional decoration. From the 14th century, this chaikhanehs has a beautiful example of what is called teahouse painting. These paintings express religious and mythical scenes.



At the beginning of the 20th century, when they began growing tea, it was embraced as a national beverage. To this day, it's a part of welcoming guests and a staple of everyday life.



You will find a pot steeping tea all day, as the center of events or as a part of daily meals and visiting. There is a saying that when you drink tea in Iran that you can taste the memories as it is interwoven into all of life's moments. Iranian tea comes in a variety of flavors, but its defining characteristic is its deep reddish-brown color. Tea is served very strong, but rather than mixing in sugar to lessen the bitterness, you're offered a sugar cube to put between your front teeth and suck the strong brew through it!

**ARGENTINA**

Called "the drink of the gods," Yerba Mate (yur-bah ma-tay) is the essence of Argentinian life. Yari, the mythical goddess of mate, symbolizes friendship as people have long gathered together with a mate to enjoy the communal ritual while benefitting from its healthy properties.

It is an herb "tea" brewed from the naturally caffeinated and nutritional leaves of the Holly Bush, *Ilex paraguariensis*, native to the South American Atlantic rainforest. Containing 24 vitamins and minerals, 15 amino acids, and abundant polyphenols and caffeine, it is a refreshing, nutrient-packed drink.



Traditionally, it is prepared in a small pot or dried calabaza gourd and drank through a special metal straining straw called a bombilla. Yerba mate is revived by adding hot water as it is passed around a gathering so everyone bonds through sharing it.

To say thank you in this situation is seen as an impolite refusal of the drink and it is best said when you are all done drinking as a way of saying you aren't having any more. Stirring the drink is seen as not trusting the host, and could be seen as insulting. It is best to drink directly and not to mix it.

Partaking in the comradery of drinking the tea together is comforting and a sign of friendship. Yerba mate is said to have the strength of coffee, the health benefits of tea, and the euphoria of chocolate all in one beverage!



## RUSSIA



Outside of Russia, people think of vodka as the preferred drink, but tea is their more universal choice of beverage in Russia. While visiting Russia, you may be offered a cup of zavarka (za-var-ka), a loose-leaf tea concentrate brewed with a small metal container called a samovar (sam-o-var). Samovar translates loosely to "self boiler." Water is kept hot in this vessel while the teapot is set on top to keep a very strong, usually black tea, and then served in large mugs. The black tea can be a Russian Caravan tea with a smokey flavor or a blend of a Keemun, a more oxidized or darker oolong from southern China and a Formosa from Taiwan with a hint of smoky Lapsang Souchong or Tarry Souchong.

When pouring a serving, you may not want to fill your cup to the brim. Instead, guests take an inch or less of this powerful preparation and then add boiling water to dilute the strong brew to preferred strength. Russians typically drink it black, but hosts will offer milk and sugar, as well as a snack. Serving zavarka to guests without cookies, crackers, or some other side is considered improper.

As the samovar keeps both water and zavarka hot all day long in the center of a table, a nice warm cup is always ready to be shared and enjoyed.



## PAKISTAN

It is almost impossible not to be offered tea in Pakistan. It is a must-have in everyday life and courtesy to guests. Green or sabz chai, and black teas or kahwah are the most popular teas available.

Dum ki chai, a favored tea, combines milk with a black tea base and is flavored by adding green cardamom and ginger. The chai is generally very thick and sweet. This creamy tea is fragrant, and the taste is endearing. Pakistani people prefer this kind of tea and drink it many times in a day.



An interwoven part of Kashmiri culture for special occasions, noon chai, is a distinct pink color chai and is a unique blend that includes a mix of pistachios, almonds, salt, milk, and spices like cardamom, cinnamon, and star anise. A pinch of baking soda gives it a unique pink color. It is served with delightful pastries like sheermaal, kandir tchot, bakarkhani, and kulcha.

More casually enjoyed is doodh pati, or milk tea, which is made without water but milk giving it a denser, warm, rich, creamy texture.

No matter the tea you try, your day is not complete without a cup in Pakistan.



## GREAT BRITAIN



Though tea was introduced through trading with China in the 1600s, the iconic British tradition of afternoon tea did not become a standard until the 1840s when Queen Victoria was ruling, and tea was becoming more accessible to the wealthy and upper-middle class.

During this time, there was a long interval between meals. Lunch was served at midday and dinner later, around 8 p.m. The gap between meals was too long for the seventh Duchess of Bedford, Anna, so she had her household staff prepare a mini-meal around 4 p.m.

It included tea and a selection of cakes or small sandwiches. Her creative solution inspired upper-class peers to do the same, then it spread across the country and other societal classes. Expanding on the tea trend, they started having tea in the gardens where guests could enjoy tea and cake in a lovely setting.

Afternoon tea is not to be confused with high tea. High tea is named for the high table you would have your tea at, like a dining table, and you would have more of a substantial meal with your tea. It was created by the working class having it between 5 and 7 pm after coming home from work and is served with hearty dishes or an evening meal.

No matter the time or place they have tea, today, it's the quintessential beverage of Great Britain's culture and day-to-day life.



## UNITED STATES of AMERICA

*A melting pot of tea styles and innovation.*


Tea was first imported in 1676 to America with the first Dutch settlement in what we know today as New York City. In protest, tea was dumped into Boston Harbor December 6, 1773, and it was made black tea with ice all the rage during the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis, Missouri. The invention of the tea bag was patented in 1903 by Roberta O. Lawson and Mary Molar- en from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and first to use it in commerce, 1908 by Thomas Sullivan in New York City.



A young country compared to most, America has embraced tea as a symbol of hospitality and pride in the South and a favorite beverage of many. Seventy to eighty percent of tea consumed is as black iced tea, but both hot and cold tea is served in many cafe's to specialty tea shops, and can be purchased in most markets. You find Taiwanese boba, Japanese-inspired, English influenced, modern and an eclectic mix of tea shops.

Much of the tea in America is imported, however, there is a tea farm that dates to the late 1700s, and today, small tea farms can be found across the country in the warmer areas. So, which tea would you like in America? Cold, refreshing iced tea, a robust hot black tea, a sweet, buttery green tea, or boba tea that young people are craving? They are all here for you to explore in America.



A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a small tea bud with two leaves. The background is a vast tea plantation with rows of tea bushes stretching into the distance under a bright sky. The image is split vertically down the middle.

*Tea is the ultimate mental and medical remedy and has  
the ability to make one's life more full and complete.*

*Tea has an extraordinary power to extend someone's life.  
Everywhere where people will plant tea, long life will follow.*

*- Zen Master Eisei, 1191 AD*

# Health Benefits

When it was first discovered tea was not appreciated as much for its taste as it was for its medicinal value. Eating the unprocessed tea leaf has a naturally bitter taste, and though not offensive, it was first recognized for its health benefits before it was considered a drink that is enjoyed for its flavors.

Science is now confirming many of those health benefits with the bioactive compounds found in tea. The last decade has seen an increasing medical interest in tea's health properties beyond its pleasing tastes. These studies are not definitive, and more studies need to be done on the benefits of all teas, but what has been completed seems promising.

One-third of the weight of tea leaves are antioxidants called flavonoids which are mainly responsible for its health benefits. The flavonoids contain various polyphenols including gallic acid, epicatechin gallate (ECG), epigallocatechin gallate (EGCG), p-coumaroylquinic acid, and galocatechin-3-gallate (GCG).

The most potent of the flavonoids are the epigallocatechin gallates (EGCG). They have been linked to lowering heart disease, and clogged arteries; having advantageous effects on glaucoma, Type-2 diabetes, DNA damage, and cognitive decline; and aiding in weight control, digestion, tooth health.

Researchers are finding that the polyphenols, a type of flavonoid that is in all teas, could possibly help prevent cancer, the results are not conclusive, however, but are encouraging.

All teas share anti-microbial, and antioxidants properties, as well as, they are hydrating. Teas contain the compound theophylline, which is used in licensed medicine for the treatment of respiratory diseases such as asthma.

It is the L-theanine and caffeine in teas that are connected with improving memory and lessening the chance of decline in mental abilities. L-Theanine is known for giving a calming effect and diminishing the jitters, yet won't cancel out the mental alertness effects of caffeine. Also, the caffeine in tea is slow absorbing and long-lasting. You don't have a spike of caffeine, but a longer, more even release into your system.

Gamma-aminobutyric acid or GABA is a chemical messenger or neurotransmitter that occurs naturally in your brain, and all teas have GABA, but oolongs especially have naturally high levels of GABA. It helps block over-stimulation in your central nervous system, which has been connected to stress, anxiety, and chronic pain. To enhance this chemical messenger in tea, a Japanese scientist in 1987 adapted the oxidation tea process into a nitrogen-infused step free of oxygen. This converts the naturally occurring glutamate in all tea leaves into more GABA. Teas that are sold having the added GABA treatment are called Nitrogen Treated teas or GABA tea. Tea sellers are promoting these treated teas based on that GABA potentially lowers stress, improves sleep, and reduces depression and anxiety. In Japan, where it is a popular tea, for it to be advertised as a Nitrogen Treated tea or GABA tea, it must contain at least 150 mg of GABA.

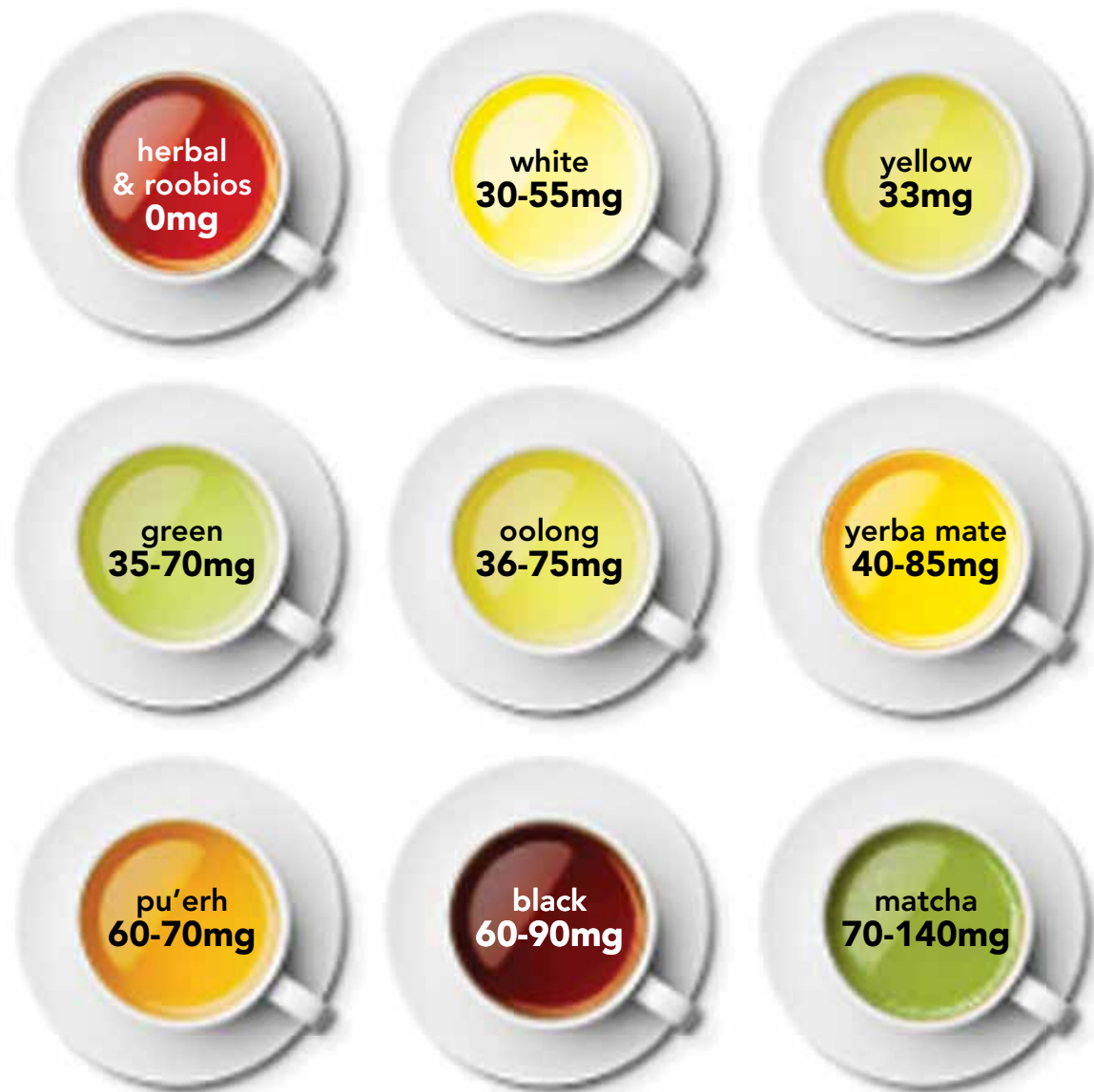
Since all tea comes from the same plant, most health benefits can be found in all of them. What makes some tea have different strengths of health benefits depends on the degree of oxidation and how much it is processed. Green, white, and yellow tea are the least processed and oxidized of the tea types; therefore, a more significant amount of nutrients are preserved in them. If tea has an added process like fermentation, it can enhance specific health benefits as well. [Below](#) are some of each primary tea type's benefits, but it is not a definitive list as there are many studies and more are being done every year.



Researchers suggest two to three cups a day to derive the benefits, as long as caffeine is not an issue. Even though raw, unprocessed tea leaves have more caffeine than coffee beans, standard brewed tea releases about half as much caffeine as brewed coffee. If you still want to reduce the amount of caffeine in your tea, steep the initial tea, discard it and re-steep a second time. The second steeping should have up to half the amount of caffeine as the first steeping.

*The following benefits are not meant to treat or cure disease or medical conditions, as more studies need to be done to confirm the claims.*

### CAFFEINE CHART per 8oz cup



**Black Tea's** caffeine content can alleviate fatigue, stimulate mental awareness, and raise energy levels. It has been shown to reduce stress hormone levels and act as a nerve sedative, frequently relieving headaches.

It also contains several vitamins considered essential for maintaining health, including Carotene (a precursor to vitamin A), Vitamin B1 and Pantothenic Acid, Vitamin C and Vitamin B6, and has antioxidants and protective properties against cancers and inflammation.

Studies have shown that black tea may potentially protect the lungs from damage caused by exposure to cigarette smoke. It also may reduce the risk of stroke and aid in oral health.

Black tea supports better digestion by promoting good bacteria and inhibit the growth of bad bacteria, as well as work as an anti-inflammatory and soothe intestinal irritations.

**Green Tea** is made by steaming tea leaves, green tea has a higher concentration of EGCG and has been predominantly the most studied of all the tea types.

Green tea's catechins have been found to help inhibit cancer growth. The National Cancer Institute states, "[Catechins] scavenge oxidants before cell injuries occur, reduce the incidence and size of chemically induced tumors, and inhibit the growth of tumor cells."

Green tea's antioxidants may also interfere with the growth of bladder, breast, lung, stomach, pancreatic, and colorectal cancers. Also, it's connected to preventing clogging of the arteries, burning fat, counteracting oxidative stress on the brain, reduces risk of neurological disorders like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases, reduces risk of stroke, and improves cholesterol levels. A Harvard study saw a possible positive effect of green tea to lower inflammation and have a reduction in artery plaque build-up.



**White Tea** has all the benefits of green tea, and up to 20% of the tea leaf is made up of catechins. Catechins have very potent antioxidant and anti-microbial properties. One study showed that white tea has the most anti-cancer properties compared to more processed teas.

It can also help to repair and maintain healthy skin by protecting your skin against the effects of ultraviolet light. It also can possibly slow down the aging process and reduce the risk of premature aging because white teas' enzymes inhibited the breakdown of elastin and collagen, which can lead to wrinkles. White tea's anti-inflammatory ability helps with inflammation-related conditions, like rheumatoid arthritis. Although not to be seen as a cure, it can help alleviate stress and inflammation.



**Oolong (oo-oo-long) Tea** combines the health benefits of both green and black tea. It contains the full range of polyphenol antioxidants, catechins, and theaflavins that scavenge free radicals and have anti-cancer characteristics. Naturally, it has higher levels of gamma-aminobutyric acid or GABA, an amino acid that helps induce relaxation and sleep. GABA also has found to discourage the creation of fat cells. The polyphenols in oolong tea help to control obesity by activating the enzyme responsible for dissolving triglyceride (fatty deposits) and enhancing the function of fat metabolism.

**Pu'erh (poor or poo-air) Tea** is categorized as a fermented tea and is praised for its medicinal properties. It is commonly used in China to detoxify the body and aid digestion. It has strong digestive, antibacterial, and warming properties, and cleanses the bloodstream of fat and toxins from meat and fatty foods.

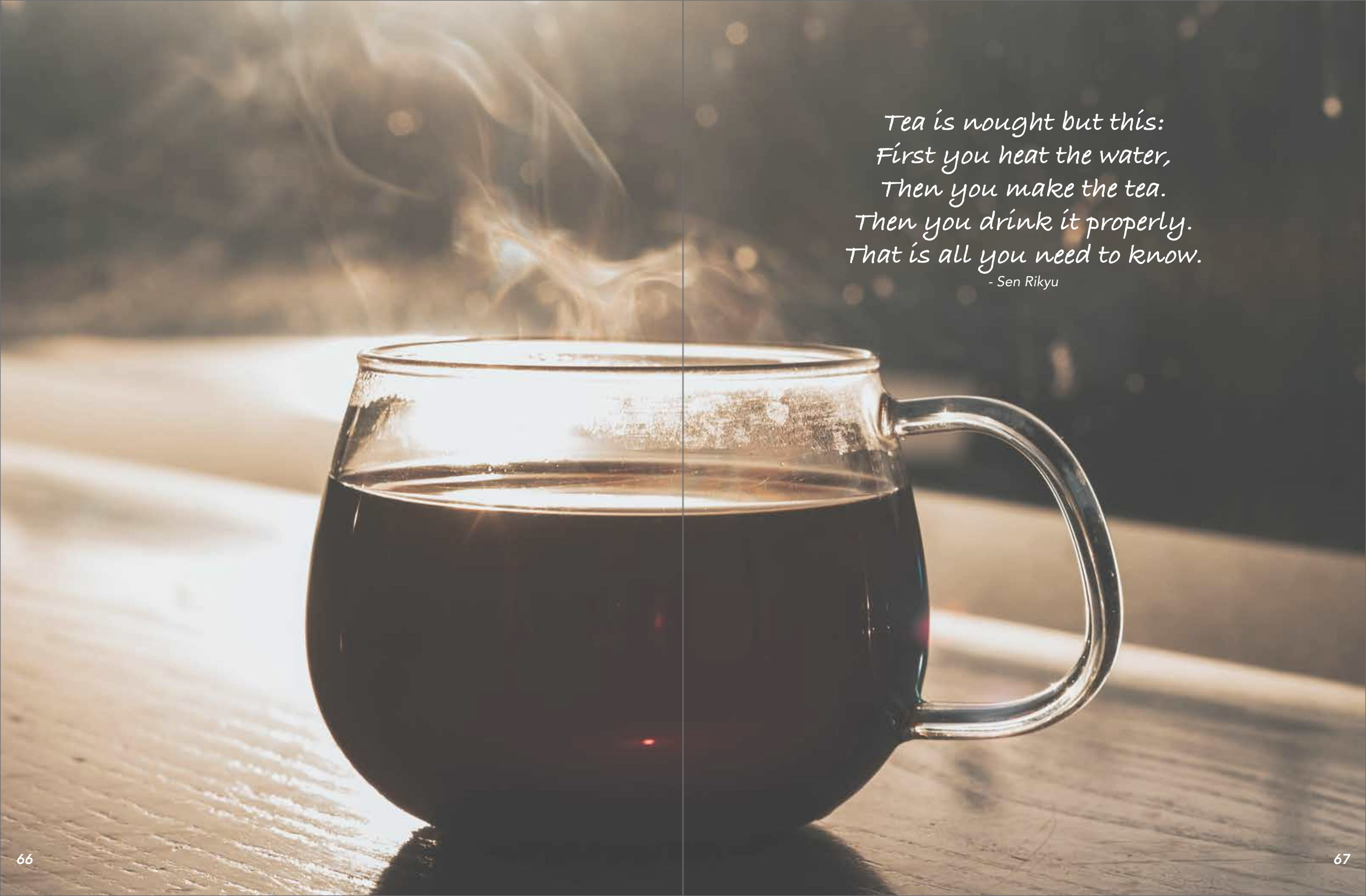
Since pu'erh was found to produce lovastatin, a substance known to reduce cholesterol and plaque of the arteries, in recent studies, it is recommended having 5 to 8 - 6 oz. cups per day to see the potential benefits.

One study showed that animals given pu'erh had less weight gain and reduced LDL cholesterol. By suppressing the synthesis of fatty acids, it can help the body not produce higher levels of fat, therefore, allowing for easier weight loss with a healthy diet and exercise.

**Yellow Tea** does not as many studies published, as it is much more rare to come across than the other teas. However, the chemical components of yellow tea are measurably different than other tea varieties because of the "sealed yellowing" process. It can be exceptionally high in caffeine, polyphenols, and theanine. The polyphenols are bioactive substances that act as antioxidants in the body, and theanine, an amino acid, helps reduce anxiety and high blood pressure. Yellow tea was also found to contain vitamins B1, B2, and C.

Some studies have shown that yellow tea can improve lipid metabolism and protect the liver against chemical injury. Yellow tea can also chelate heavy metals, inhibit colon cancer cells, and inhibit the growth of various intestinal microorganisms.





*Tea is nought but this:  
First you heat the water,  
Then you make the tea.  
Then you drink it properly.  
That is all you need to know.*

*- Sen Rikyu*

# The Perfect Cup of Tea

There is so much advice about how to make the “perfect cup of tea” it could fill volumes. Of course, you want to make your tea so you can enjoy it, but with personal preference, leaf sizes, and types of tea, portions, tea leaf and water quality, etc., it is almost impossible to write the exact way to prepare a tea that would produce the perfect cup of tea. Don't let this discourage you from finding your own perfect cup. Though it may seem overwhelming trying to consider it all, it comes down to a matter of preference and understanding certain basics. You need to start where you are comfortable and work your way towards variations that suit you.

*My own tea experience can vary everyday.*

*Do I use filtered water? **Sometimes.***

*Do I steep it exactly the required amount of time? **Sometimes.***

*Do I always use loose leaf tea? **No.***

*Do I add my tea bag the same way all the time? **No.***

*Do I try to find time for tea everyday? **Yes.***

*Do I try to find time for tea every day? **On my better days :)***

*The perfect cup of tea is the tea you enjoy drinking.*

General guidelines on brewing tea will help you explore what interests you, and hopefully finding what you like. I admit, at first, I was steeping my green tea too long and hot, and when I followed some general guidelines, wow, what a difference! But I have come across friends who steep green tea outside of the recommended range and love it. Tea isn't about brewing a right or wrong way all the time, but about finding your enjoyment in it.

*The basic principle of brewing tea is the same:*

Combining hot water and tea in a vessel varying in how much tea you use, and how hot and long you steep your tea.

*Overall, you will need to:*

Bring fresh cold filtered water to a boil and determine if the tea needs boiling water or less than boiling water temperature.

Measure your loose tea, or use a tea bag of your choice.

Pour the prepared water over your tea.


Steep according to the instructions (on average approximately 1 to 5 minutes).

*Enjoy!*

Since there is more detail than the above instructions, we will be reviewing everything from some practical pieces in your kitchen to make tea, such as a kettle, teapot, strainer, and/or tea bags to water quality and temperature and different tea types, adding to your tea, and ways to make your tea infusion.

Keeping a tea journal or taking notes of your tea experience is an excellent way to record what you tried and decide things you prefer and help you choose future teas or ones you want to try, and record techniques and gadgets you have used.





*Hot bubbles boiling  
Rising misty happiness  
My tea kettle sings*

# Gizmos and Gadgets



Tea may have started simply by adding raw tea leaves to boiling water in a pot, but over time and influenced by cultures, it has developed different tools and ways of brewing tea. I found myself exploring ancient traditions to the newest innovations in teaware all the while, appreciating the thought behind the approaches. These gizmos and gadgets developed over thousands of years to present day are just a sampling of what can be used.

## Tea Kettles

After you decide which tea to brew, a kettle is usually the first thing you grab. It is used to heat your water to the temperature needed to steep your tea.

There are many types of tea kettles. They come in many shapes that are functional, traditional, modern, and culturally influenced. There are electric kettles or kettles made for stovetops. They can be as simple as a pot on the stove to boil water, or as customized as a computerized electric kettle that heats water to the correct temperature when you program in what kind of tea you are steeping. Some kettles have added features like a whistle to indicate when the water is boiling or a built-in thermometer.



There are other features to consider, besides what a kettle is made of, such as the handle, the top opening, and spout. Handles can be completely rounded or a half handle. Some handles have a hinge so that you can move it out of the way to fill it, or a half handle makes it easier to fill without having to move the handle. You will want to make sure your handle has extra insulation, or you will need to use oven mitts, so you don't burn your hands when it's hot. The opening should be wide enough and is easily accessible to fill with water. The spout should be easy to use and tip to pour. Holding a kettle before you purchase and tipping it like you are going to pour it, will give you a good idea how comfortable it would be for you.

Other features that your kettle could come with are a whistle, thermometer, copper bottom for rapid boiling, temperature control, an all-in-one in which you can boil and steep your tea in the kettle, and keeping your water warm beyond the initial heating. You can find many features that can aid in making your tea. If this is your first purchase, you may want to start with a simple kettle with some features like a whistle or a rapid boiling copper bottom, or an electric kettle that heats your water in a glass vessel, and then decide for later what features you think would enhance your experience.

These added features are designed to help prepare water for your tea. Choosing which added features for your tea kettle is up to your budget and personal preference. Ultimately, it is about choosing a kettle that is functional and pleasing to you. Your kettle needs might adjust over time to the teas you are brewing and how much you brew. It's not uncommon for tea drinkers to go through a couple of tea kettles before they find the right fit.

**Features you may want to consider when choosing a tea kettle are:**

- The highest quality stainless steel you can afford.
- A glass that is made to withstand the high temperatures of heating like Borosilicate glass.
- A quality handle that stays cool when heating the kettle and pours easily.
- Heats water quickly.
- Resists rusting, cracking or breaking.
- Has a large or convenient opening for easy filling.
- Has a way to signal the water is boiling or an automatic shut off.
- Size appropriate - is it mainly for just you or more people?
- Temperature control for teas that need a specific temperature.

You will want to occasionally clean the interior of your tea kettle using warm soapy water and rinse thoroughly, unless there are specific cleaning instructions, then use those instead. The exterior may need wiping down at least once a week. To clean hard water deposits in your kettle, boil equal parts white vinegar and water and let the kettle sit for a few hours. Then thoroughly rinse and repeat as needed.

Kettles can be made from a variety of materials such as cast iron, stainless steel, glass, ceramic, and copper. Innovation is growing in tea ware, and it's exciting to see new materials and designs.



### **Stainless Steel Kettle**

A practical option is a stainless steel tea kettle with its durability, easy-care, clean up, and affordability. It is highly resistant to rust and corrosion, and a quality steel won't leach into your heated water. Some stainless kettles have a copper bottom to have rapid boiling, even though it is a higher initial cost, it can end up saving you time and money.

It is strongly recommended buying the highest grade stainless steel you can afford, or look for enamel-lined kettles. Studies have been done on lower grades of stainless steel pots for heating on stoves, and the leaking of metals have been detected. The stainless steel grades of #316 or #430 are the best for food use.

The enamel-lined stainless steel kettles are practical and easy to clean. The enamel doesn't leak and affect the taste of the water. It has the benefits of stainless steel's durability and quick heating paired with an easy to clean, non-leaking enamel.

Overall, stainless steel is an excellent choice with many options available in colors, styles, and added features.



## Glass Kettle



Glass kettles that are made specifically to heat at high temperatures using borosilicate glass work very well boiling water, as they don't leak any known containments. Regular glass can not be heated on an electric or gas stove, only explicitly designed glass can withstand the heat without breaking. Some electronic tea kettle manufacturers combine a stainless steel base, handle and lid with a glass body to have the best of both options. This combination gives more durability to the tea kettle with the stainless steel accents and the benefits of a glass body to heat your water inside.

A borosilicate glass kettle can be used directly on the stovetop, electric or gas and when at the right water temperature, tea leaves can be directly added to the kettle. Glass is visually pleasing and it's easy to see how your water is heating and can double as a teapot and watch the tea leaves steep and the turning the water into a beautiful infusion.

Following the instructions for heating and care is very important. You will want to avoid extreme temperature changes because it can cause breakage or cracks. Even though it is made to heat to high temperatures, it is more fragile than metals. The benefits of using glass kettles are that you have no contaminants leaking into your water, and it is visually pleasing. These benefits are balanced against its drawbacks of being fragile and cracking due to extreme temperatures.

## Cast Iron Kettle



The Japanese cast-iron kettle, a Tetsubin, has been used for hundreds of years dating as far back to the 17th century. They come in a variety of colors and textured designs, and available as small as 2 cups (0.5 liters) to 21 cups (5 liters). It is known to improve the taste of water and allowing the true aroma and taste of tea to come through. They are traditionally heated over a charcoal fire but can be heated on a cooktop, but not an electric stovetop.

How the kettle may improve the taste of the water is related to the water molecules creating a more stable bond when exposed to heat and minerals of the cast iron. This stable bond makes for smoother, sweeter tasting water.

The Tetsubin should not be confused with a cast iron teapot that has an enamel lining. Some cast-iron teapots are described incorrectly as kettles. Most cast iron teapots cannot be heated directly on the stove, but are made to hold water that has already been heated to steeping temperature. An enamel lining paired with the cast iron can't be heated on the cooktop because the materials absorb heat differently and cause the enamel to crack. To be safe, before using it, check the cast iron tea kettle to confirm it can be heated on a cooktop.

More care is needed for cast iron tea kettles as it does tend to rust, but some mineral build-up is expected. Even with the special care for the Tetsubin, most owners are loyal fans of this tea kettle and won't boil their water in anything else.

## Teapots



A teapot is a vessel in which the tea is steeped. It can be a very personal choice, an expression of art, region, or culture. However, there is an appreciation for its everyday beauty in its simple, practical use.

When you start searching, you will encounter many options.

First, you will want to decide what size you need. The most popular sizes of teapots are the one to six cup capacity because they are more accommodating a personal tea time to a small group of people. It's not uncommon to have a variety of sizes eventually, but when starting a 2 to 6 cup teapot can be a comfortable place to start.

Secondly, you will want to consider how the tea will be steeped in your teapot. Will you want to loose tea, use a strainer or infuser? Teapots can come with their own strainers or holes in the inside of the spout area that strain the tea, or you can use your own infusers or tea bags.

Thirdly, you should consider the material your teapot is made of. They come in a variety of materials, such as ceramic or pottery, glass, and cast iron, stainless steel, natural stone, and silver or silver-plated. Each material has its drawbacks and benefits.

## Glass Teapots



Glass teapots can be exquisite and visually appealing with a view of the tea leaves and the color of the tea. You can even judge when your tea is ready by the color of the infusion and how the tea leaves swell open. As the tea leaves are unfolding and expanding during steeping, releasing its flavor and coloring, it can be referred to as "The Agony of the Tea Leaves." I am not sure if they are experiencing any agony, but it can be pleasing to watch.

A practical benefit of a glass teapot is it won't transfer tastes from the previous steeped tea or leak any containments. So you can use black tea, rinse/wash, and then a green tea without having residual residue influence the taste.

Most glass teapots are made out of borosilicate glass so to withstand heat, but always confirm the glass material before exposing it to high temperatures. Glass is beautiful but prone to cracking.

Styles range from hand-blown forms to contemporary designs. As with other teapots, you will want to have a strainer or a way to strain your tea. I have seen beautiful glass teapots that come with a candle warming stands which I do recommend because glass teapots also cool down faster than most teapots.

You can clean a glass teapot with white vinegar and rinse very thoroughly for a sparkling finish. Often, glass pots are dishwasher and microwavable safe. To prevent cracking, avoid setting your glass pot down in cold water when it is hot.

Glass teapots are a beautiful way to see steeping tea change into a delicious infusion. Once you start watching it, it is hard not to want to see it every time!



## Ceramic Teapots



Ceramic teapots come in various designs and sizes, allowing many ways to express one's style. They can come with or without a way to strain the tea.

Ceramics are made with different types of clay from stoneware to porcelain and can be glazed or unglazed. According to the type of clay used and craftsmanship, they can have a wide range of appearances and durability. The combination of the firing techniques, the clay, and the glaze of a typical ceramic teapot are naturally made to retain heat and keep the tea staying fresher longer.

A ceramic teapot can either have a glazed (smooth glass feel) or unglazed (matte natural clay feel) inside. If glazed inside, you can change tea types easily without a transfer of tastes. Glazed ceramic teapots are a good match for black teas. An unglazed inside of a teapot will absorb the tea flavors and its best to use one type of tea for it. Oolong is the usual pairing with a small unglazed teapot and green tea with a larger unglazed teapot.

A clay that is fired at a high-temperature transforms to a glass-like material, and the clay becomes denser. This combination makes it more durable. An example of a high fired clay is Jingdezhen porcelain. Jingdezhen is a city in China where this beautiful white clay comes from. It has been mined there for 1700 years and is considered the porcelain capital of the world. It had no competition until Germany was able to reproduce a white clay with similar properties in the 18th century.

Jingdezhen porcelain is admired for its fine, thin and lustrous qualities and due to the high firing temperatures it can hold up to, it makes its edges resistant to chipping. Other clays that are thicker and fired at lower temperatures can chip more easily. Today, Jingdezhen teapots are still being made, and they can be purchased at a reasonable price. It is, indeed, a worthy purchase.

Another notable type of clay teapot is the unassumingly small Chinese Yixing (Yee-shing) teapot. This small teapot has been dated to the 1500s but archeologist have excavated pottery related to teaware as early as the 10th century near Yixing, China made of the local "zisha" or the purple or sand clay. The Yixing clay is said to have the ideal minerals that give tea the best possible taste. The signature unglazed inside retains a hint of the flavor of the tea by absorbing the natural tea leaf oils. Therefore, it is best to use one type of tea for it. The most ideal pairing with this teapot is with oolongs, but pu'erh and black tea do well, too. The Yixing teapot may be too small for green and white teas as they need more space to open up fully for their best flavor.



No matter the tea type used, avoid any scented, added flavorings, or herbal, as it will be absorbed and possibly transferred to other steepings. This absorbable surface also effects cleaning your teapot. It should be only a rinse, no soap.

The styles and options for ceramic teapots are abundant. There are English, Chinese, Japanese teapots, decoratively themed teapots to free-form thrown on the pottery wheel ones from a local artist. They can be elaborately decorated to simple and sleek. The glazed teapots need only the basics of care, requiring only a rinse between uses and deep washing only when they haven't been used in a while. Other than the risk of chipping, ceramic teapots are low maintenance and retain heat well. Ceramic is the iconic material used for teapots and with excellent reasons such as the choices of style, clay, finishes, and easy care.

### Cast Iron Teapots

Cast iron teapots have become more popular recently, but they have been around for hundreds of years and, when properly cared for, can last generations. Having a solid construction, they are also durable.



Cast iron teapots retain heat so well that you can enjoy your tea longer. It's not uncommon for people to keep adding tea throughout the day with more hot water to a warmed teapot. You will especially want to pre-warm your teapot with a warm water rinse, although it retains heat longer, heating them takes longer too.

Following instructions for a cast iron teapot is vital to safety and keeping your teapot for many years. Most have an enamel lining that eases the care needed to maintain them but loses the desired effect on the water quality.

Overall, they require more care and special instructions for washing, and a trivet or a warming trivet to set the teapot on. Even with the extra attention, cast iron teapots have dedicated owners, appreciating the warmth and beauty of these teapots. It's not uncommon for them to stay warm for hours as you enjoy your delicious tea.



A teapot made in America, ca. 1765-69 by John Bartlam just sold for \$800,000 to The Met Fifth Avenue Gallery 704. Mr. Bartlam was a potter who lived in Cain Hoy, South Carolina just outside of Charleston. This teapot was made with the local clay referred to as Cherokee clay which created a quality porcelain. It was being exported to England and Josiah Wedgwood saw this clay and Bartlam's pottery as a potential economic threat to their teaware.

The teapot today does not seem pristine but it has a rich history and fine craftsmanship. It will make you look twice at the next antique teapot you come across.

### Gaiwan



There are teapots, then there is a gaiwan (guy-waan) which translates to "lid and bowl." It is usually made of porcelain clay and is an elegant and simple way to brew your tea. It is a small lidded, single-serve cup with a saucer used to steep tea that was invented in China during the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644). Even though the gaiwan is excellent for steeping any type of tea, it is considered by many tea connoisseurs to be the preferred method for brewing tea with delicate flavors and aromas. You add your dry tea, then add hot water, cover and steep. The lid has a place on top to apply pressure with your finger to keep it from slipping off and allow for you to pour the tea into a drinking cup and enjoy!



## Kyusu

A specially designed clay teapot is the kyusu (key-u-sue) which means "teapot" in Japanese. It looks like a small pot with a straight side handle and a mesh strainer inside by the spout, making it perfectly designed for steeping sencha, a Japanese green tea.

The side handle is made to hold the teapot and be able to move it small circles when the tea is steeping. The mesh over the inside spout hole is to separate the fine pieces in the tea. The low volume capacity allows for smaller, concentrated steeping of the tea leaves, and therefore better control of steeping time and being able to maneuver the tea.

During the steeping, you gently swirl the water and tea leaves in waves creating a small ball of tea. Then when you pour the tea, the ball of tea is up against the fine mesh strainer, leaving the small pieces in the teapot, not in your cup. This teapot and the steeping technique used compliments a quality sencha, bringing out the best flavor.



## Tea Press

*Tea in a French Press? Yes!*

Tea Presses are a great way to have your tea. It can produce ideal infusions because the loose tea isn't confined to an infuser allowing the tea leaves to have more room to expand and release their flavors.

First, you may want to pre-warm the press. Then, add the measured loose tea leaves, pour in the right amount of hot water, and let it steep. Once steeped, put the lid on and push plunger down to separate the tea leaves from the infusion. Stop the strainer just above the tea leaves on the bottom, just short of touching them, because if you press the tea leaves too hard, it can release the more of the bitter compounds and give your tea an astringent taste.

Once strained, pour and enjoy!



## Matching Teapot to Tea Type

There are ideal recommendations for a teapot to match a tea type, and preferably a strainer is not used during the steeping. You can strain the tea leaves when you are pouring the tea into your cup using a strainer that sits on top of your cup or your teapot may have a built in strainer inside where the spout starts. To avoid over steeping the tea leaves, only steep the amount needed for one drink or for each person that is drinking, and therefore emptying the teapot for each steeping. If using whole leaf tea bags, it is still beneficial to use the suggested teaware. Ultimately, you can enjoy your tea in most any teapot, these are guidelines not rules, and each variations within the tea types can have different suggestions.



*This is only a small general sampling to give you an idea of how tea can be paired with a particular teapot.*

Tea Type	Preferred Teapot
Black Tea	thick walled heat retaining ceramic
Green Tea	unglazed ceramic, or a porcelain or glass
White Tea	gaiwan or thin walled porcelain
Aged White Tea	Yixing or a thicker walled ceramic or a porcelain
Oolongs	Yixing teapot
Taiwanese Oolongs	Yixing and porcelain teapots with space to open up or small portions in a gaiwan
Fermented Tea	unglazed ceramic porous Yixing teapot
Raw Pu-erh	porous Yixing teapot with thinner walls
Aged Raw Pu-erh	thicker walled Yixing teapot
Ripe Pu-erh	thicker walled Yixing teapot
Yellow Tea	gaiwan; or glass or porcelain teapot that leaves have room to expand
Herbal	glazed ceramic or glass

\* When using a Yixing, it is best to use only one kind of tea type and if scented, only one scent, as Yixing is unglazed and retains the flavor.



## Teapot Doodads

### Warming Stands

Warming stands can be either electric or flame-sourced to keep the teapot warm and come in a variety of materials, such as glass, cast iron, and ceramic. They are especially helpful when tea needs to be warmed for extended visits or hours at a time, and they can be aesthetically pleasing as well.



A double boiler system works like a warming stand as it is used to boil the water for tea and keep the teapot warm by stacking them.

### Tea Cozy

A tea cozy or tea cosy is a traditional way to keep your teapot warm, too. It's made of padded cloth or yarn, and fits over your teapot, similarly to the way a hat fits to give added insulation. It's speculated that they were first used when Lady Bedford established afternoon tea time out in the gardens in 1840s England, but there is no confirmation of this. They have become a fun way to express your personality and can be a quirky way to cover your teapot.



### Trivet

Trivets are convenient to put your hot teapot on so not to damage susceptible surfaces. On its own, it can't keep the teapot warm, but it provides protection of surfaces, particularly when using a cast iron teapot, it can be invaluable. It can be made of wool, stainless steel, ceramic, wooden, and most insulating materials.



### Tea Pet

A tea pet does not mean dressing your pets up and serving tea!  
*(Even though this has been done!)*

Dating back to the Yuan dynasty (1206–1368) a tea pet, or tea lover's pet, is a small clay figurine that is used by tea drinkers for good luck. It is placed near when having tea and by pouring the last few sips of tea on it, you are nourishing the luck to grow.

Originally they were made from prized Yixing clay in China and were unglazed and one color, but today they come in many variations. Most tea pets are made representing Chinese zodiac symbols and mythical animals associated with good luck.

Being unglazed and made of the Yixing clay, you would pour the leftover tea on the pet and over time, up to years, the pet will absorb the color of the tea and become shinier and fragrant with tea smell.

For many years, the most popular tea pet is Pee-Pee, a boy figurine, that when water pours out of him, it is used to tell when the water is hot enough. Other figurines have been developed to be used as well for judging the water temperature and have elaborate water flowing out.

Tea pets are a fun way to add the whimsical and possibly luck to your tea time!



## Infusers and Strainers



Tea can be infused or strained in teapots, cups, and travel thermoses.

A tea infuser is a device with holes traditionally shaped like a ball that is used to contain the tea, then is submerged in hot water to allow the flavoring to be released while filtering the tea leaves from floating in your vessel. It can be reusable made out of metal, ceramic, silicone, etc. or it can be a single-use one like a tea bag. Infusers, like a tea bag or stainless steel ball, is placed inside the vessel either before the water is poured or afterward. You mostly see them used for single cup servings but can be easily used with teapots. If you add the strainer ball or bag after the water is poured, make sure to leave enough room for the displacement of the hot water so not to overflow the hot water.

You may be surprised to know that tea infusers were very popular in the late 1800s to early 1900s. They were crafted by local silver smiths, and companies like Tiffany or Gorham made high-quality silver infusers. They were designed in multiple sizes and had a chain or a way to be able to pull the infuser out of the liquid. Today we have various shapes range from traditional balls, pyramids to fun animals or characters.



A tea strainer is a reusable piece also made with holes to filter the tea, and usually is shaped like a basket, but is not enclosed onto itself. It is either sitting inside a vessel, and you pour hot water into it and over the tea leaves to steep, or it can sit on top of a cup and strain the already steeped tea from the teapot as it goes into the cup. A tea press uses a strainer that is flat and is used to filter the tea leaves from the liquid by pushing the plunger. There are new innovations like a strainer that you steep the tea leaves in hot water, and when placed over the cup, it is released into the cup as its strained through a fine nylon mesh. Strainers are generally made of stainless steel or metal mesh, but ceramic, glass, bamboo, cotton and silicone can be found too.



The hole sizes of either a strainer or a reusable infuser can range from a tiny holed fine mesh to larger holes. Whether you use small holes or larger ones for steeping your tea can be determined by the tea leaf size you are using. If your tea has smaller pieces, you may want a mesh-like infuser or strainer with tiny holes. If you use larger whole tea leaves, a larger-holed strainer or infuser may work for you. Why not just use a small holed strainer or infuser all the time? You can, but some feel that the larger the holes will potentially increase the ability of the flavorings to be released more into your infusion.



Also, the strainer or infuser should be deep and broad as possible to allow the leaves to move around and open up, therefore, the larger the overall size of the strainer you use, there is potentially more room for the tea leaves to open and release its flavoring.



Some teapots can come with strainer baskets, or they could have only holes inside where the tea spout meets the body. When using loose tea, you have options on how you want to steep them, such as using an infuser or strainer to contain them or adding them directly into the vessel to freely steep. Both ways have their advantages. Not using a straining basket or infuser allows the tea leaves to open more fully, giving its potentially authentic flavor. However, you lose the ability to be able to control steeping times with this technique and works best when you are emptying your teapot when the tea is steeped. This could be the case if you have many guests sharing the tea, or you are doing single steeping. In these instances, some tea leaves can end up in your drink, and it can be a fun way to have tea leaf readings.

If you do not wish to have the tea leaves loose and want to control your steeping time, then you will need a strainer, infuser or use tea bags.




Their advantage is they are easy to remove when steeping is complete, and you are left to enjoy the infusion without concern of astringency or bitterness from over-steeping.

Whether you are purchasing a strainer or an infuser, you will want to be sure that it will fit your teapot, vessel or cup. Measuring before purchasing can avoid the chance of a wrong size infuser or strainer.

You may want to consider purchasing a small specialty dish made to hold tea strainers and infusers once you pull them out of the vessel. They can be convenient and work well to contain the small amount of liquid that might leak from the infuser or strainer.

Even though strainers and infusers can be seen as inferior due to their limited capacity and ability to allow all the tea leaves to open fully to release all the tea's flavor, they prove popular for convenience, control of the steeping, and still can produce a delicious cup of tea.





*Water is the mother of tea,  
a teapot its father,  
and fire the teacher.*

~Chinese Proverb

# Water



Water quality affects the taste of your tea and since there are only two necessary ingredients to make tea, water+tea, it is essential. Finding and using the best water will be worth the effort.

The right water can make the difference between good, bad, and the best tea flavor. A recent study completed by Cornell University tested the impact of different sources of water on tea. It had concluded that for releasing the most antioxidants and health benefits in green tea, you should use bottled spring water with the pH as close as possible to 7 (neutral). Surprisingly, however, the preferred taste of tea was made with tap water.

Overall, it was concluded that spring water was the best choice to use to steep your tea as it provided a balanced amount of minerals and the closest pH of 7. The only drawback with spring water is its availability or having to purchase it. Reverse osmosis (which is in most tea shops) came in a close second, but the high cost of installing a system made it difficult to justify as a practical option. A better choice would be using a carbon water filter with a pitcher or attached to your water source for reasonable means to have the best tasting everyday tea.

Even though tap water was the first choice for best tasting tea, it can be heavily chlorinated, the smell of sulfur, or have a hard or metallic taste. Using distilled water, in which all the contaminants and minerals are removed, will make your tea

taste flat because some minerals in the water enhance the tea flavor. Evaluate your tap water for contaminants and decide if an investment in a water filter is needed. When preparing to make tea, start with cold, freshly poured water, not water that has been sitting or has been boiled earlier. Freshwater has a higher oxygen level which aerates the tea and gives a better full-flavored tea. Using sitting water or previously boiled water can give your tea a flat taste.

Over-boiled water can have the same effect as boiled water. When the water evaporates off, it can leave behind condensed minerals and calcium changing the taste of your tea. A tea kettle whistle or an automated electric kettle can help you avoid over-boiled water.

Another consideration is the temperature of your water when you are filling your kettle. Using cold water instead of warm or hot water is a precaution against chemicals that can potentially be released by hot water systems.

Using a microwave to heat your water is useful in a pinch, but determining the temperature is very difficult and uneven. Re-heating your tea in a microwave is a personal preference, too. Some tea heated in a microwave can also have a flat taste.

After adding the freshest, cold water to your kettle, another water temperature to consider is when you add it to the tea. There are specific water temperatures recommended for each tea type, and a general guideline is that the hotter the water, the darker and more full-bodied your tea will be; the colder the water, the sweeter and milder it'll taste. This concept can help guide you on how hot or cold you should have your water when instructions are not available. It is recommended that most black teas should have boiling to 212°F (100°C) water added and conversely, green teas need lower water temperatures to taste its best.

If you don't have a kettle with a thermometer, you can judge the water temperature by knowing that at sea level water simmers at 190°F (88°C) and boils at 212° F (100°C). The boiling temperature drops about a degree for every 1,000 feet in altitude increase.

**General recommended water temperatures per tea type:**

Tea Type	Preferred Temperature
CTC Black Tea, Rooibos, Herbal	212°F (100°)
Loose Black Tea, Fermented or Dark Tea, Pu'erh	200°F - 212°F (93°C - 100°C)
Oolong darker (more oxidized)	205°F (96°C)
Darjeeling (black tea variety)	195°F - 205°F (91°C - 96°C)
Oolong greener	185°F (85°C)
Green, White, & Yellow Tea and Yerba Mate	160°F - 180°F (71°C - 82°C)

Chai's water temperature depends on the tea type used to make them. Most commonly, chai will have a black tea base, but check your ingredients to make sure it may be a green or oolong.

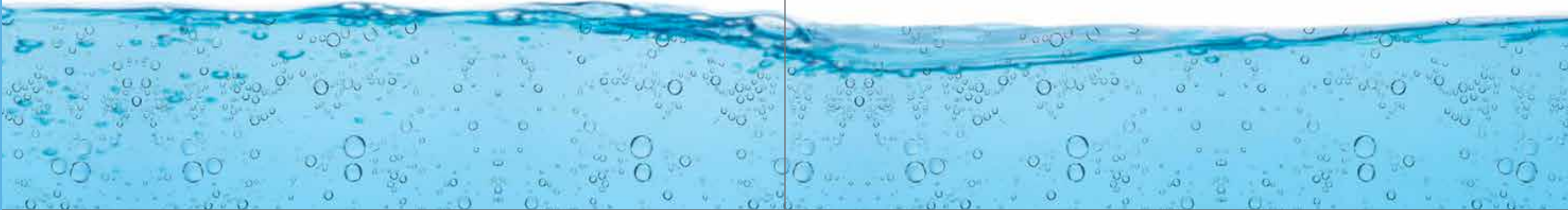
Most of us don't have a thermometer when making tea, so if you can observe the water boiling safely, here's an easy way to estimate temperatures:

Water Action	Approximate Temperature
Bubbles form on the bottom of the pot but don't rise yet	180°F (82°C)
The first bubbles begin to rise	190°F - 195°F (88°C - 91°C)
Full rolling boil	212°F (100°C)

If you can't safely observe the water boiling, then bring your water to a boil, and follow the instructions for the tea you want to steep here is a guideline.

*There are exceptions, but generally:*

Tea Type	Cool Time	Preferred Temperature
White tea Yellow tea Green tea	3 - 4 minutes	160° to 180°F (71°C - 82°C)
Yerba Mate	2 - 3 minutes	170° to 190°F (77°C - 88°C)
Oolong tea greener	2 - 3 minutes	185°F (85°C)
Oolong tea darker	45 seconds	205°F (96°C)
Dark tea Ripe Pu'erh Chai with black tea	use boiling or let cool 1 minute	200°F(93°C)
Darjeeling tea	30 sec to 1 minute	195° to 205°F (91°C - 96°C)
Black tea Cut-Tear-Curl (CTC) Loose Leaf	use boiling water	212°F (100°C) 200°F - 212°F (88°C - 100°C)
Rooibos	use boiling water	212°F (100°C)





*Using loose tea allows  
the leaf to reveal  
its true complexities of flavor  
and benefits to us  
and  
we passionately  
appreciate its beauty.*

# Loose Tea



Loose tea is more available than ever before in the Western World. You can find it in grocery and health food stores, tea shops, and even local tea blends may be available. Make sure you source your tea at a reputable place or use a researched brand because no amount of proper steeping, pure water, or additive can make a poor quality tea taste better. The benefits of using good loose tea are taste, freshness, and increased health benefits. It also is likely to contain more whole pieces, and therefore, less dust and smaller pieces that can cause bitterness. By keeping the leaf whole, it allows the leaf to retain more of its powerful catechin antioxidants and plant polyphenols, too. This is only a guideline as there are always exceptions to this. Some high-quality, healthy tea can be in a powder form, like matcha, or smaller pieces like sencha. These types of tea are judged to be of higher quality by their own standards, freshness, and color.

The shape of tea is determined either its natural processing or by purposeful manipulation. White teas are the least touched leaf shape as they curl as they dry, but teas can be twisted, balls, spiraled and even compressed into bricks, animal shapes, or into creative containers. Some of these shapes can be done mechanically, but by hand, is the preferred method.

## Tea Grade

If you are looking for one way to understand grading tea, surprisingly, there is no universal standardized grading system for tea. The systems that do exist are often considered to be more of an art than a science. This is probably due to the individualistic nature of teas. Its not that there isn't a way to test an tea for quality, but that the taste, smoothness, complexities are based on the tea plant's genetics, when and how it was processed, the terroir (the region and place it was grown).

A general way to classify tea quality is by tea leaf size and appearance which can be broadly classified into four categories: whole leaf, broken leaf, fannings, and dust.

A tea grower employs mechanical sorters that use sieves to separate out leaves into broken leaf, fannings and dust, and quality hand-made tea is a Whole Leaf.

**Whole leaf** means tea that's primarily made up of whole, unbroken leaves or buds. These teas have an extensive range of complex and subtle flavors.

**Broken leaf** is when the tea leaves are crushed to make bagged teas. These teas tend to produce a darker cup of tea and infuse faster than whole leaf teas.

**Fannings** are finely broken pieces of tea leaf with a recognizable coarse texture.

**Dust** is a fine tea powder left over from producing the other grades of tea.



## Orange Pekoe

A more known way to describe black tea grades is with the Orange Pekoe (Peck-oh) classification. This system is not straight forward. Orange Pekoe grading does not necessarily indicate a better tea, but is a descriptor of tea, but they do rank to what should be a higher quality to a lower quality. You can have a Flowery Orange



Pekoe that produces a better taste than a Special Fine Tippy Golden Flowery Orange Pekoe. However, you would expect the Special Fine Tippy Golden Flowery Orange to be better tasting, and generally it is a better tea.

This classification originated in the Western World, and it is used to identify teas from India, Sri Lanka, and other Asian countries, but isn't used in China. It is often mistaken for a type of tea or having a taste of orange, but in its most basic understanding means "tea," all tea, and has nothing to do with color or flavoring. Today, some teas are named orange pekoe, which could refer to it being a medium-grade black tea or just a marketing expression. You would want to look for a detailed descriptor or abbreviations like FOP to tell you how the tea was graded, not just its label of an Orange Pekoe.

### *How did the expression orange pekoe come to be?*

The word orange could have come from the Dutch Royal House of Orange-Nassau. During the 1600s, the Dutch East India Company was a significant influencer in the tea trade, and they decided to name a tea they imported after the largest royal Dutch house at the time, the House of Orange-Nassau. They believed that this would make the tea sound more desirable to its European customers. It was shortened to the House of Orange, then to Orange Pekoe. The word pekoe came from the Chinese dialect Xiamen word pek ho, meaning white down, referring to the white down on a newly picked tea bud. This type of leaf makes the best quality of tea.

The fine white down on the buds and leaves can also be the reasons why it is called orange. When oxidized, the white down can turn a lighter golden color or bronze, thus giving an orange-look to the tea.

Today, when grading tea, the term orange pekoe is used for determining the size and style of a leaf. Size matters because, generally, plucking smaller leaves are more valued than large leaves, as the buds of the tea plant are the smallest and make a smoother better-tasting tea. Orange pekoe also refers to the where the tea leaves were picked off the tea plant (higher on the bush the better quality), and first flushes (flushes are the first leaf bud and the two youngest small leaves) are only graded, so its a higher quality tea.

Tippy is refers to the leaf buds and its content ratio in the tea. It could be all tips or a portion of tips mixed in. Tips in the tea influence the amount of caffeine, flavor, and price. Since tippy teas tend to have a smoother, milder flavor, it has a higher quality and price. Identifying the appearance of tips and leaf buds in loose leaf tea takes practice and learning. Teas that are described as tippy include Silver Needle White Tea, Oriental Beauty Oolong, Huangya (a yellow tea), and the black teas: Yunnan Gold and Golden Monkey.

Flowery refers to whole pieces of tea leaf found in the loose tea. If paired with golden descriptor word, it is referring to a first flush picking with very young buds. If used without the descriptor golden, then it could be a tea from a second or third flush with many tips included.

*Each general classification: whole leaf, broken leaf, fannings and dust have their own orange pekoe descriptors.*

### **Orange Pekoe Grading:**

#### ***Whole Leaf (Highest to Lowest)***

<b>SFTGFOP</b>	Special Fine Tippy Golden Flowery Orange Pekoe: Smallest whole leaf.
<b>FTGFOP</b>	Fine Tippy Golden Flowery Orange Pekoe: Medium whole leaf
<b>TGFOP</b>	Tippy Golden Flowery Orange Pekoe: Large whole young leaves whose tips are golden
<b>FOP</b>	Flowery Orange Pekoe: Extra-large whole leaf
<b>FP</b>	Flowery PekoeOP Orange Pekoe: Long wiry leaf without tips

#### ***Broken Leaf (Highest to Lowest)***

<b>GFBOP</b>	Golden Flowery Broken Orange Pekoe
<b>GBOP</b>	Golden Broken Orange Pekoe
<b>FBOP</b>	Flowery Broken Orange Pekoe
<b>BOP</b>	Broken Orange Pekoe
<b>BPS</b>	Broken Pekoe Souchong
<b>OP</b>	Orange Pekoe
<b>Fannings</b>	<a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tea_leaf_grading">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tea_leaf_grading</a>

Dust

You don't need to learn all the terminology to recognize quality loose tea. When observing loose tea, remember whole leaves will give you a less astringent tea, since when tea leaves are broken and crushed, they release more bitter tannins. However, no matter the shape of the tea leaves, you don't want it to crumble apart when you hold them, it can be a sign of staleness. Since forms can be very different, it is good to rely on your other factors as well to judge tea, like aroma and color.

All quality tea will have a distinct aroma. If you are getting a barely detectable scent when you inhale deeply, this could be a sign that the tea is sub-quality, or getting old and stale. Green tea should smell grassy, light and fresh, and black tea should smell earthy, floral, and sweet. When steeped, excellent tea should be deeply aromatic and enhanced by the smell of the tea leaves.

A superior tea will have a strong and recognizable taste and a texture, with maybe a degree of astringency, creaminess, or full body. Sip slowly, allowing the tea to roll over different parts of your tongue. You should be able to notice different flavor notes and textures. The best tasting green tea will feel and taste smooth, bright, and refreshing, while black tea has a deeper, more robust taste. An excellent tea of any type will stimulate different flavor sensations on your tongue as you drink. Flavors that are barely noticeable, overly astringent, or unpleasantly chemical-tasting can indicate that you are drinking low-quality or stale tea.



The aroma of dry green oolongs can range from a peach to osmanthus flowers. Iron Budda, a green oolong that is pictured above, has the light flowery and fruity aroma with a mellow and rich taste and sweet after taste.

A tasting wheel is designed to help you find descriptive words for how tea can taste or smell.



## Measuring Loose Tea

Loose tea is measured with a teaspoon or weighed. Loose tea can be challenging to fit in a teaspoon, so you may get a heaping spoon full appearance. This is where your personal preference can come into play because measuring loose tea by volume is an estimation.

You may want to start with a lower amount of tea and incrementally increase it for a stronger tea. If you think you have over-measured and it's a tea type that can be re-steeped, you should try to re-use the tea leaves to get the most out of them.



Depending on how oxidized your tea is can affect how much you may want to use. To help judge how much to use for an more oxidized tea like black tea, which is a more full-bodied tea, you may want to use closer to 1½ teaspoons per 8 ounces of water. Whereas, a light, less oxidized white tea might need 2 teaspoons to 1 tablespoon with the same amount of water.

Then are also teas with added fruit and herbs that you want to allow for the flavoring bits to make it into your measuring by how you are scooping it. Visually inspecting and adding the pieces, you can make sure it will have the flavoring strength you prefer.

**A guideline on measuring tea with a teaspoon is:**

Tea	Hot Water
1 tsp.	6 ounce
1-1½ tsp.	8 ounce
2-2½ tsp.	12-16 ounce

A scale to weigh your tea is more accurate than a teaspoon because you are measuring its density not contending with its ability to fit into a teaspoon.

Depending on how strong you like your tea, you can weigh 2 to 3 grams of any loose tea per 8-ounces of hot water. When determining the strength you prefer, a light white tea might be closer to 3 grams, and a more full bodied black tea may be closer to 2 grams. For 10 to 12-ounce vessels, you can weigh 4 to 4½ grams of loose tea per serving.



When purchasing loose tea, you will want to be able to estimate how many cups of tea you can make from an ounce. There are about (10) 6-ounce infusions with 1 teaspoon per serving in 1-ounce. Most of us don't use 6-ounce sized cups anymore. The average cup today is 8-ounces, and you could have about (7.5) 8-ounce infusions with 1.5 teaspoons. This is only an estimation, you may find you need a little less than 1.5 teaspoons or up to 2 teaspoons or more. Generally, some darker, more robust teas can be measured more conservatively, whereas, a lighter white or green tea might have more.

**For single steepings, but if your tea has specific recommendations, use those:**

Loose Tea	Portion	Water	Infusions made
1 ounce	1 tsp.	6 ounces	10
1 ounce	1.5 tsp.	8 ounces	7.5
1 ounce	2 tsp.	8 ounces	5
1 ounce	2 tsp.	2 ounce	5
1 ounce	2.5 tsp.	12 ounces	2 to 3 infusions

Sometimes, how many cups of tea you can make from an ounce of loose tea includes all the second, third, fourth, etc. infusions, too. Oolongs can have multiple infusions, so you will have many more cups of tea in an ounce than a tea that is infused only once per steeping. The proportions I provide are for single infusions only. If you can have multiple infusions, all the better, but personal taste is a factor. The taste of a tea can change to a milder version when its not recommended for re-steeping.

When purchasing loose tea at a tea shop, don't hesitate to ask how many teaspoons per 8-ounces of water is recommended for the tea you are interested in. It should be found on the label for the loose tea as well.



## Steeping Loose Tea

Traditionally, loose tea is most often steeped in teapots, but other choices are becoming popular. They can be made in a single-serve cup or a travel vessel or thermos. No matter the vessel or strainer combination, you want to understand how the strainer helps you control steeping your loose tea. Some strainers fit into vessels and ones that steep and strain the tea leaves as you pour it. Both ways work well; however, you need to be aware of how long the loose tea is steeping to avoid a bitter infusion. Keep in mind, too, loose tea tastes better when the leaves are allowed to expand and open fully. A large strainer allows for more room for the tea leaves to expand and open up; a smaller strainer limits the leaves opening fully. However, it's about balancing your choice between convenience and practicality with full flavor. You can have fun exploring all the strainer and vessels to steep your loose tea. Innovation is abounding in this area, and chances are you can find the one that works for you.



Another consideration for steeping loose tea is how you pour the prepared water. You can pour hot steeped water directly onto black, fermented, and more oxidized teas. Less oxidized teas like green, white, yellow and raw pu'erh should have the water poured slowly and to the side of the leaves, if possible, as not to burn or shock the tea leaves.

Sometimes there is a reference to "awakening" your tea leaves with a rinse of warm to hot water. This helps give a smoother tea in two ways: it washes away any dust or fannings from the tea leaves; and secondly, it gives the tea leaves a soak to better prepare it to release its flavors. It is essential for pu'erh to be rinsed to have its true smooth flavors come out. Pu'erh that doesn't have a rinse can sometimes have a fishy smell. Another benefit of rinsing your tea leaves is that it also allows you to warm up your vessel to match the steeping water temperature, and this consistency can release better tea flavors.

Your loose leaf tea experience can end with composting your tea leaves. You can either compost your loose tea directly into a garden drinking tea is good from beginning to finish.



*Tea bags endear us to them  
by how easily we can steep them  
to make a cup of happiness.*



# Tea Bags

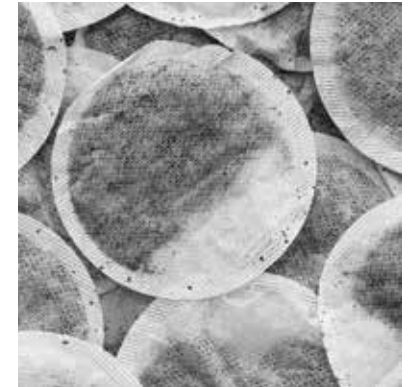
The first patent application for a “tea leaf holder” was submitted in 1901 and issued in 1903 to Roberta C. Lawson and Mary Molaren of Wisconsin, USA, but the idea did not take off for them. Tea bags (or teabags) were first accidentally used in business around 1908. A New York merchant, Thomas Sullivan, sent tea samples wrapped in silk pouches to his clients and they used them as infusers. He did not intend for them to be used as infusers, but it seemed the clients were happy, and it worked. Sullivan realized that the silk was too fine and expensive, and switched to gauze. Other people started producing tea bags, and gauze was eventually switched to paper during the 1920s when they were being more mass-produced in the United States. The tea bag went through many changes from silk to paper, hand-sewn to machine sewn. Innovation has been happening over the years with paper tea bags being heat sealed in the 1930s with Salada Tea Company, and when Tetley Tea Company marketed a new paper teabag design with double pouches in the 1950s as the better tasting and more convenient way to have your tea.

When Mr. Sullivan sent tea samples to clients in silk bags, he probably prepared them with high-quality tea. It wasn't until the mid-1900s when trying to mass manufacture the tea bag that more broken pieces or the fannings of lesser quality were used as it was easier to fill the small paper bags with smaller pieces. There are fannings that are produced from a higher quality tea, but even if they taste better than lower quality fannings, they are still a lesser grade. Today, you can find tea bags with whole leaf pieces, smaller pieces, fannings, or a mixture.



Tea bags are a single-use infuser that is purchased pre-filled with tea, or you can buy empty tea bags you fill yourself. They can come with or without a string attached. Today, most tea types like black, green, white, oolong, pu'erh, and herbals can be found in pre-packaged tea bags except yellow teas because they are so rare.

There is much debate over the use of tea bags. The negativity related to tea bags is due to the quality of tea used, and its size limitations to allow the tea to open fully and release the best-tasting tea. Ultimately, no one is arguing that tea bags are the best-tasting way to have your tea. They are, nonetheless, the most convenient, and tea quality used in tea bags has improved the last 15 years immensely making for good tasting tea.



Over the years, both the structure of the tea bag and the quality of tea have been addressed through new tea bag designs and materials that can hold better quality whole leaf pieces and are made to give more space for the tea leaves to open up and release its flavors.



A sampling of materials used to make tea bags are paper, nylon, cotton, and silk. Common types of cotton that are used are gauze and muslin. There are a variety of tea bags shapes such as a square, round, pyramid, or other 3-d shapes. The tea bags made from nylon or PLA are referred to as sachets or pyramid bags. Sachets tend to hold whole leaf teas. Some tea bags you can fill yourself, but most come pre-packaged with tea. Generally, tea bags can be used with 6 to 8 ounces of water, or if they came with instructions, use the those. However, it is a personal preference on how much water you want to add to one tea bag or sachet. I find when using whole leaf sachets, I can add more water, closer to 10 to 12 ounces, and depending on the tea type, some tea sachets recommend 12 ounces of water.

Nowadays, you need only to look at the tea section of your grocery store to see the abundant options available. You will most likely find a variety of tea types and herbals. They are advertised by the tea type, like a green tea, or a description like a Detox Tea. Make sure you read the packaging to understand what is in the tea blends. The range of flavorings in chai, for example, can be distinctive to a brand, and one company's version of an English Breakfast Tea may be a different blend compared to another company's. Also, depending on how they were processed and freshness, tea bag brands can have different tastes. As you are exploring, keep in mind that if you don't like a pre-packaged tea, you may still like the loose leaf version.

Black tea's own untraditional process called Crush-Tear-Curl (CTC) works really well for tea bags as it makes a strong brew and the pieces are small and round; thus, easier to put into tea bags. The tea leaves are run through a series of cylindrical rollers that have hundreds of sharp teeth that crush, tear, and curl the leaves. This crushing produces small, hard pellets and is sometimes called mamri tea. It was a challenge for tea companies to put whole leaf pieces in tea bags, however, putting crushed black tea in tea bags was much easier and a success.



Today, new materials are being used to help put whole leaf pieces in tea bags. They are called sachets, silken, pyramid, or mesh tea bags. The innovative material used is food-grade plastic nylon (PET), and a cornstarch or plant based nylon material (PLA). It makes it possible to use larger tea leaf pieces without tearing as a paper tea bag does. The new tea sachets, or nylon tea bags, gives the option to enjoy whole leaf tea with the convenience of single serving tea bags. They also are 3d shaped to allow more space for the tea leaves to open up better than if in a paper tea bag, and taste better.



The material, food-grade plastic (PET), is controversial due to the food-grade plastic woven into the tea bag possibly leaking of plastic into your tea. It can withstand high heat, much higher than the boiling temperature of the water, but at this time this book is written, no official studies have been completed, and therefore, it is debatable whether or not the leaking can occur. The PLA nylon, using corn starch or plant based materials instead of plastic as its base, can also withstand high boiling temperatures and is a more eco-friendly alternative with no plastic to potentially be released into your tea. The PLA option is also innovating with sugarcane to have a biodegradable product.

Tea bag paper is made of a blend of vegetable fiber called abaca, a leafstalk of Philippine bananas and is also known as Manila hemp. It is similar to the fiber used in coffee filters.



Innovation in the strength and durability of paper tea bags have made it possible for larger whole pieces of tea leaves to be used. There was concern over the bleaching of the tea bag paper to achieve the white color. Today, most companies are proactive, making sure paper tea bags have not been bleached, use chemical-filled paper or sealed with a plastic based glue. You can check the company and find their policy on materials used to make their tea bags.

Tea bags that you can fill yourself may be found in most tea shops, sometimes grocery stores, or can be ordered from internet-based businesses. Advantages to filling your own tea bag are that you have more control of sourcing your tea, choosing the material you prefer for your tea bag, and using the blend and the portion you prefer with the convenience of a tea bag.



*Refreshing and a healthy alternative,  
cold steeping tea is easy to make  
and simply great tasting!*



# Cold Steeping

Cold steeping is different from steeping your tea with hot water, then pouring it over ice like when making iced tea. Rather, cold steeping is when you add tea to cool water and let steep for hours refrigerated. It has all the health benefits of hot tea, and maybe more, without the astringency or bitterness from steeping too long, and it is almost effortless to do!

Using cool water is a slower and gentler way to bring out the smooth taste of the tea with no risk of over steeping because it doesn't activate as many tannins that potentially create astringency. Also, cold steeping produces half to two-thirds less caffeine, and it is just as high in healthy antioxidants. It may have more antioxidants than its hot version because the heated water is not breaking down the nutrients that are more sensitive.

To make cold steeped tea, you will need a container with a cover to steep the tea in, and loose tea with a strainer or tea bags, or you can use loose tea with a tea press. I use a glass carafe made for cold steeping tea with a built-in strainer under the lid, but many vessels can work, such as a mason jar, as long as they can be refrigerated, and preferably have a lid.

Next, measure your loose tea or add your tea bags. Same as for hot tea, you should use 1 teaspoon per 8 ounces of water. Fluffier and lighter teas, like a white tea, may need closer to a tablespoon to 8 ounces of water. Matcha, a condensed powdered tea, may need less than 1 teaspoon. If you are using a tea that you drink hot, you can add the ratio of tea to water according to the strength you prefer as if you were making it hot.

### **Measure the water and add tea to the water.**

Allow the tea to cool steep in the fridge overnight or depending on the tea type minimally 6 hours and up to 14 hours.

By the next morning, remove the tea leaves or tea bags and enjoy.

You can steep it to the full-bodied minimum time listed below and then remove the tea leaves. Just as you can re-steep quality tea using hot water, you can re-steep it cold as well. Re-steep the tea right away, and let it infuse for longer than eight hours - closer to 16 hours instead. The flavor will be lighter, but you'll still get a good cold brew. If you are using paper tea bags, they will probably not hold up well with long term soaking, so use nylon or re-usable infusers if you want to contain your tea leaves for re-steeping.

If you do not plan on re-steeping, you can leave the tea leaves in the container but should be drunk closer to 3 to 5 days, as the tea leaves age, too. If you remove the tea leaves, it will last closer to 4 to 5 days.

Have fun experimenting with cold brewing teas by adding fruit or spices you like, however, be aware that the tea will last as long as the fruit you are using. The best teas to use with fruit are those that are a little bit sweeter, like a light oolong, and it is good to keep in mind that cold-brewed tea comes out a bit sweeter than their hot version.

Below are time guidelines for best flavor by tea type. This is an average, you may like your tea less steeped closer to 6 hours, but once it reaches the max amount of time, this time it won't become any stronger.

*This is a "full-bodied" flavor steeping time chart:*

Loose Tea	Steep Time
Black Tea	8-12 hours
Oolong	8-10 hours
Pu'erh Tea	10-12 hours
Green Tea	6-8 hours
White Tea	6-8 hours
Herbal	12-14 hours



## Cold Brew Recipe

### **To make cold brew tea, you need:**

#### **Materials:**

- 1 tsp of loose tea or (1 to 2 tea bags) to 1 cup of water
- Container with a lid

### **Steps to make Cold Brew Tea:**

Add your measured tea to a container filled with the right ratio amount of water. Gently stir until the leaves are wet.

For best results, let the tea steep up to 30 minutes before putting it in the refrigerator.

Cover and steep in the refrigerator according to tea type.

Strain if using loose tea or remove tea bags.

*Enjoy!*



*Iced tea is too pure and natural a creation  
not to have been invented as soon as tea,  
ice, and hot weather crossed paths.*

*- John Egerton*

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In the last decade America's ready-to-drink market has taken off by capitalizing on iced tea's sweet, refreshing taste, with a boost of caffeine. Iced tea is what most people think of when asked for tea in the US. It has high recognition, loyalty, and passion, especially in the South. According to the website, TeaUSA.com, 75 to 80% of tea consumed in the US is iced tea. You can find it at most stores and cafe's, but don't let that stop you from making your own iced tea.

Tea had early beginnings in America with the first settlers from Europe. The Dutch East India Company supplied it to the first Dutch colonies established during the 1630s in a place called New Amsterdam, a town later renamed New York in 1664 when it was captured by England.

A little over hundred years later, the Boston Tea Party occurred on December 16, 1773. It was an act that was one of the starting signals of the Revolutionary War. In defiance to the taxes imposed without representation on tea, The Sons of Liberty, a revolutionary political group, dressed as Native Americans and boarded English ships docked in the Boston harbor. They were still loaded with tea, loose black, and some green, and they dumped the chests of tea into the water, about 1 million dollars worth in today's money. Tea was seen as being unpatriotic during that time; however, tea survived this time in history and went on to be enjoyed by many.

Soon after the Revolution, a small group of southern American investors was serious about wanting to grow their own tea. French Botanist, Andre Michaux, was hired to create a productive tea farm, and he was successful at a South Carolina farm, in 1795. The tea is still grown near Charleston, South Carolina on an island called Wadmalaw Island. It boasts growing tea plants that are a direct descendant of the original tea plants started by Andre Michaux.

Even though tea was available in the South, and there was a popular green tea punch made with alcohol, serving iced tea did not become a more viable option until ice houses and refrigeration were invented in the early 1800s. Traditionally, before the early 1900s, green tea was more prominent than black tea to make a cold drink, but it wasn't completely unheard of to use black tea.

The first published sweet tea or iced tea recipe has been traced back to the cook-book, Housekeeping in Old Virginia, by Marion Cabell Tyree in 1879, and she called for green tea to be used to make iced tea. It was during the famous 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis, Missouri that it became a popular trend to use black tea rather than green tea when tea plantation owner and merchant, Richard Blechynden, offered samples on a very hot day. He initially tried to serve hot tea samples but failed to entice people due to the very hot summer conditions. Improvising, he added ice and created not only a more refreshing drink but a new fad. This trend was further strengthened after World War II when green tea imports were cut off, and Americans switched to black tea imported from India. Today it has become a vital part of southern culture and welcomed anywhere in the United States a cool refreshing

drink is appreciated.

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Here are 2 ways you can prepare it yourself:

Hot Method for Iced Tea

Prepare the tea as you would hot. Steeping to the recommended time and removing the tea leaves or teabags when done.

Then, let it cool down and refrigerate.

When ready to enjoy, add sugar if preferred as it is poured over ice.

The Sun Method for Iced Tea

Fill a pitcher with 2 pints of cold water and add 2 to 3 tea bags or 2 to 3 tbsp. of loose tea.

Place the pitcher in full sun for 4 hours. Strain and refrigerate overnight or 8 hours.

Recommended teas to try iced tea or cold brewing :

Black Tea:

Darjeeling with a pale gold color and brisk taste is a favorite.

Ceylon is bold and fresh with rich colors.

Assam is great for a strong malty, traditional taste.

Kambaa from Kenya is a stout with flowery flavor with a beautiful golden color.

Green Tea:

Gunpowder green tea is bold and slightly smokey, but mild, and refreshing.

Yin Hao Jasmine is a green tea that has a beautiful Jasmine aroma and a sweet, smooth taste.

**Image needed**

## Adding To Tea



Adding the small sweet granules called sugar to tea has impacted world history starting in the 1700s and early 1800s England. It created an international demand that changed the landscapes and cultures of countries trying to fulfill that demand. Some of these impacts created prosperity, and some created atrocious acts against humanity, like sugar plantation slavery. English doctors of the 1700s called sugar a devil's concoction due to the side effects of sugar on the teeth and health. However, the combination of sugar and tea would be here to stay.

As tea made its way along the trade routes, it was assimilated into cultures and uniquely prepared. Tibetans like to flavor tea with rich, warming yak butter to add needed calories and nutrients living on the rugged Tibetan Plateau. Moroccan tea which is green tea with mint, has been a tradition since the 12th century. In the 1800s India, black tea was added to make chai which was previously herbal-based for thousands of years.

Some cultures have preferences on what to add to tea if anything at all. Many people who live in China and Japan, drinking green, oolong, yellow, or white tea don't add anything to tea. However, dark teas and ripe pu'erh it is acceptable to add milk, as they are a more oxidized tea. Ultimately, there are no set rules for adding what you'd like to your tea. It is a matter of your tastes and interests. With so many choices out there, it is yours to customize how you want.

You can add your own flavorings to tea, and then there are teas that you can purchase with already added flavorings or scents. Today, many chefs and mixologists are experimenting with flavor combinations with tea by bringing back traditional combinations or creating new ones. There are many options for flavorings and tea combinations.



Here are a few additives that you can consider adding to your tea:

**Milk or Milk Alternative:** Black tea in a tea bag is almost made to go with milk and sugar. The high tannin content due to the Cut-Tear-Curl Method used for black tea specifically for tea bags gives a more astringent, robust flavor, and an appreciated kick of caffeine. Adding the creaminess of milk to black tea or more oxidized teas is preferred, except for Darjeeling and Earl Grey tea which is optional.



There is a heated debate in England over how to add milk and tea. There are people that prefer to add milk to tea already poured into the cup and those who prefer adding milk to the cup first, then the tea. Studies and many articles have been written to see which produces the best tasting tea or if there is even a difference. In England, it would be polite to ask anyone you are serving tea to which they prefer!

**Lemon and Citrus** are packed with flavor, and can be added to any tea, however, slices especially compliment white, most green, rooibos, and black tea. Adding lemon to green teas can actually enhance its health benefits. Lemon, lime, orange, and even grapefruit work very well with many iced teas with a black tea base. Americans tend to add milk to Earl Grey, but try a splash of lemon to really bring out the delicious bergamot flavors.



**Honey** is a classic tea additive. It's sweet, has trace amounts of nutrients, and it's also great for soothing the throat. It can be added to any tea, but be careful not to add it to boiling water as it will break down the sugar, making it noneffective.



**Rock Sugar**, pure, unprocessed amber sugar crystals are the best way to enhance the natural sweetness of your tea without changing the flavor. They can be sold as pieces or on a stick. For the best flavoring add them during the steeping. You may want to try a German Rock Cane, a sugar that is naturally unrefined and made from beets, not from sugar cane.



**Agave syrup (ah-GAH-vay)** is made from the agave plant, it is a natural sugar sweetener. It is sweeter than honey though thinner consistency. The juice from the center of the plant is heated and processed to produce this sweet syrup. It is often considered more natural because agave is less refined than many other sweeteners.

Steeping a **Cinnamon Stick** with chai can enhance its taste. It is very warming and spicy. Also, you can try a stick of cinnamon with fruity teas like strawberry, apple, and pear blends for a little warming spiciness. Cinnamon works very well with creamy blend teas, too.

**Mint, Peppermint** and **Spearmint** added to tea is a simple way to spruce up your tea, and is especially good with green, cold steeped and iced teas. Mint is a must-have in Moroccan tea!

**Cardamom (Kar-de-mum)**, which is available in many varieties good for tea, is a pungent spice commonly used in chai teas and is excellent for warming up a creamy or bold, black cup of tea. Varying between smoky, spicy and fragrant, cardamom pods give any drink an exotic taste.

**Ginger** is quite potent and adds zing to any tea. Not only will it cleanse your sinuses, but it also helps with flu symptoms and calm your nausea. If you add a too much, it will make your tea taste sour. Start with smaller pieces and see how much you like. Ginger is good with citrus tea, pomegranate tea, or chai.



## Essential Oils



We don't always have fresh lemons, oranges, or herbs on hand, but essential oils are a healthy and convenient alternative to add extra flavorings. Not all essential oils can be eaten. However, you probably already have eaten some that are edible. Flavorings, natural and synthetic, have been added to our foods for years. Before using essential oils, you should make sure you aren't allergic to any of them.

Choosing a high quality, edible, pure, organic essential oil for your tea gives you the best health benefits. You must consider the potency and quantity, as a little goes a long way. For example, it could take 50 lemons to make a small 15 ml bottle of essential oils, so a drop is all you need. Not all essential oils cannot be added to plastic containers or should be ingested, and they are not recommended for young children without proper consultation.

You can add the drop needed during the time you steep your tea.

*Here are a few good oils to add to tea:*

**Bergamot** (*ber-ga-mot or berg-a-mut*) essential oil has a fresh, sweet, citrus scent and is known for being uplifting and relaxing, building one's confidence and mood.

**Cinnamon** bark essential oil has a warm, spicy aroma. Cinnamon is thought to promote good cardiovascular and immune system function, as well as, give an overall vitality.

**Clove** has a sweet, spicy fragrance that is invigorating and revitalizing. It has strong immune support properties, and may also be useful for digestive support or physical discomfort.

**Ginger** essential oil has a warm, spicy fragrance that is often energizing. Ginger has been known for thousands of years to be used to help soothe, comfort, and balance the digestive system.

**Lime** essential oil has a pleasant citrus aroma that may help mental clarity and encourage creativity, as well as, have an invigorating and stimulating effect. It is known to taste great with iced tea.

**Lemon** essential oil can be used for overall energizing, for circulatory support, and for natural cleansing purposes.

**Orange** essential oil may be used for cellular support, uplifting moods, and emotional balance.

**Lavender** essential oil is good for blood circulation and digestion. The aroma reduces stress and anxiety.

**Peppermint** essential oil is well known for its health benefits for digestion, nausea, depression-related anxiety, muscle and nerve pain, the common cold, and indigestion. However, peppermint can interact with some medications, so make sure to check with your doctor before using.



## Fresh Fruit infused tea

If you are looking for a way to jazz up your next cup of tea, fruit-infused tea is a healthy way to include fun flavors. It is about adding pieces of aromatic fruit with your regular tea. The best results are when you add the fruit while steeping your tea. It can either be drunk hot or poured over ice for a delicious summer treat.

### **Here are some combinations:**

Black tea has a strong flavor, which is why infusing fruit with the tea can complement it.

First, choose fruit that is sweet and has a stronger flavor, such as oranges, watermelon, and raspberries. Then, add a half a cup of fruit pieces to one black tea bag or one teaspoon of loose black tea in a strainer or infuser ball into a one-quart heat resistant jar with a lid (like a mason jar).

Fill to an inch before the top with boiling water and steep for three minutes.

Remove the tea bags or strainer, cover.

Let the fruit steep for another ten minutes.

Strain and serve hot or over ice.

Since green tea and white tea have a milder taste, you don't necessarily need to use strong tasting fruits, especially if you want to have the flavor from the tea come through. Subtle and smooth tasting fruit such as peaches, blueberries, and mango are especially delicious infused into a lighter tea.

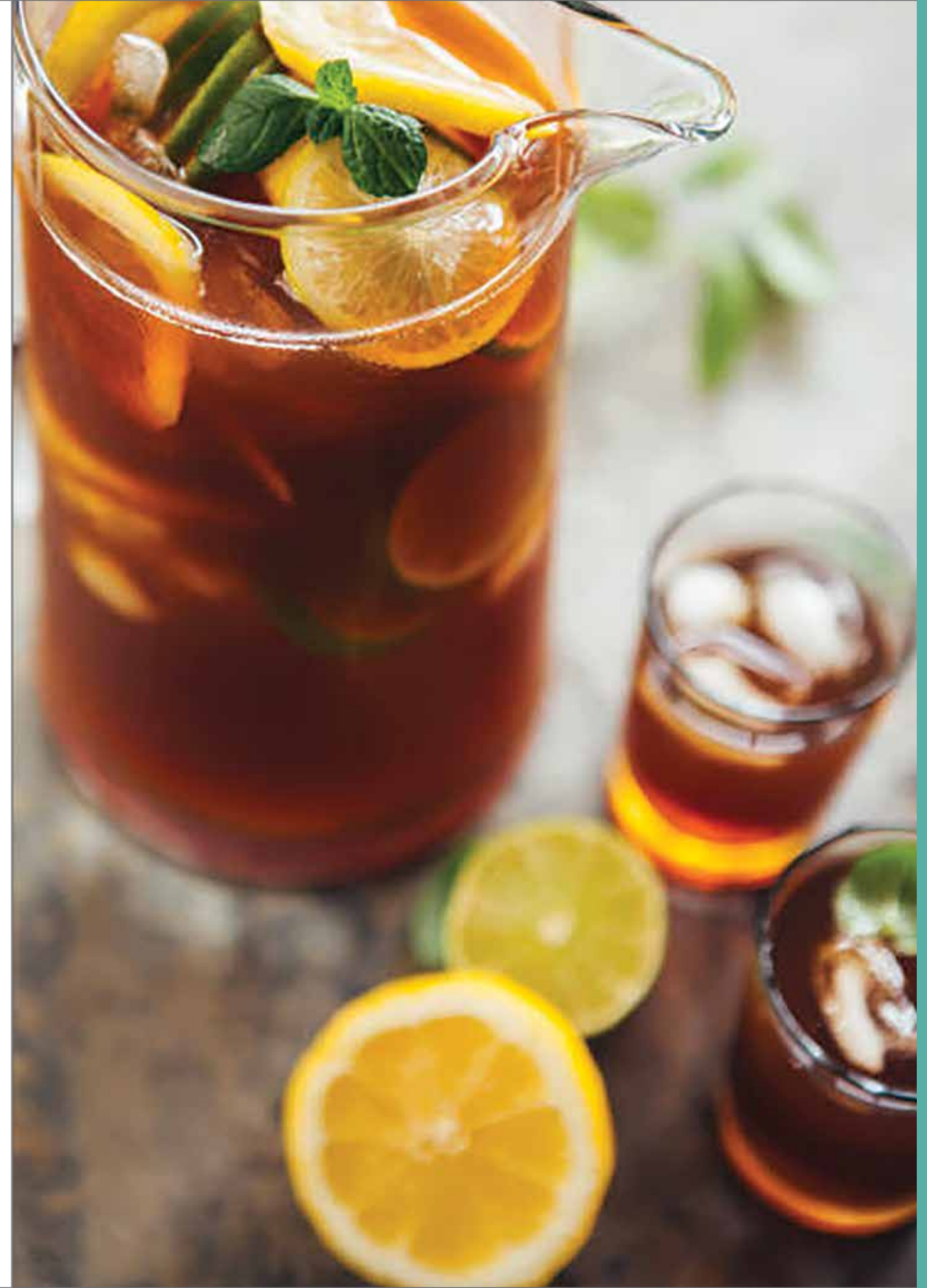


### **To make a lighter tea fruit infusion:**

Add a ½ cup of chopped fresh fruit, two green tea bags or white tea bags; or 2 tsp of either white or green tea in a strainer or infuser ball into a one-quart heat resistant jar with a lid (like a mason jar) and fill to an inch before the top with boiling water.

Steep for ten minutes.

Strain, and serve either hot or over ice.



# Chai Tea



Chai's intoxicating warm spicy and creamy taste will leave you wanting for more.

The word chai is actually Hindi for the Chinese word cha or tea, so calling it chai tea is like saying "tea tea." Also in India, masala means a blend of spices, and chai means tea. So, masala chai is literally spiced tea. We call it simply chai as a mix of spices and tea steeped into a beverage. Only within the last few hundred years tea has been added to India's spicy herbal drink, masala, which has been drunk for thousands of years. Today, the traditional ingredients of chai are usually a black tea mixed with spices, like cinnamon, cardamom, cloves, ginger and black peppercorns, and milk. The spiced mixture, or masala, is typically brewed strong then milk and tea is added and sweetened with sugar or honey. Recipes for chai have been adapted across continents, cultures, towns, and families. Black tea can be substituted with green or other tea types and the spices can be ones that grow locally. It is these variations that can make each chai recipe an exotic escape and delivers unique flavorful benefits.

Street vendors in India selling chai are called chai wallahs. They brew their chai recipes for all to see and have a loyal customer base that can span generations. Traditionally, chai is sold and drunk out of locally made red clay cups as they are thought to have properties that make the chai taste better. Chai can be drunk as much as four times a day and is a welcoming drink to visitors.

Outside of India, you can find ready-to-drink chai in stores to hand made chai's in cafes and tea shops. Most of the milky, sweet chai treat we can order in cafe's today do not have much in common with the origins of Indian Chai; however, ordering a chai at a local tea shop made from a blended loose leaf with spices can be a treat worth trying! Since ready-to-drink chai can have a broad range of spices and combinations, I recommend trying a variety of chai's to find what you prefer, or make your own chai.

*Since chai can vary from town-to-town and family-to-family, there is not a set recipe that defines chai, but it typically consists of these main ingredients:*

**Tea:** Assam and Darjeeling black teas that are native to India are most popular to use as a chai base. It also can be made with various types of green teas, oolongs, or an herbal base. An herbal, like the South African red rooibos, is a popular choice that can be used or you can find totally herbal blend made only from spices.



**Sweetener:** Honey, brown and white sugar are preferred sweeteners, but other sugars, like demerara, turbinado or coconut, may also be used. Jaggery, an unrefined cane sugar, is a popular sweetener used in parts of India.

**Milk:** Indian chai is often made with buffalo milk, but a more Western version is made with cow's milk or dairy alternatives, like soy, almond, rice and coconut milk. You may also find yak or goat milk in other chai beverages around the world. Some recipes will have you steep a strong chai in water and then dilute it with milk. Other recipes have you simmer the chai spices in a mixture of water and milk or in all milk.

**Spices:** The spices, or masala, used will vary by region, climate, and cultural preference. Traditionally, cardamom, ginger, cloves, cinnamon, and black peppercorns dominate and all easily attainable in India. Vanilla, nutmeg, mace, star anise or fennel may also be seen in some traditional recipes. As chai has become more integrated into the West, bay leaf, allspice, cacao, saffron, pumpkin or orange are more trendy ingredients. Coriander and cumin may also show up in some recipes.



If your chai contains a black tea base, it can be brewed a bit longer and in slightly hotter water temperatures than chai that has a green tea base. Experiment with the amount of tea leaves and the length of the steep time within the recommended range to find your desired brew strength.

Generally, between 200°F (loose leaf black) and 212°F (CTC black tea) (93°C and 100°C) for 3 to 5 minutes for black tea chai.

For a green tea base, it should be steeped at a lower temperature, about 170°F to 185°F (77°C to 85°C) for 3 to 5 minutes.

When experimenting, varying the water temperature for black or green tea in chai isn't recommended, as water that is too hot will over-extract the bitter components of tea, while water that is too cool might not fully draw out the aromas and flavors of tea. Stay with adjusting the quantity of tea and how long you steep it within the suggested guidelines.

*For easy enjoyment, this is a chai recipe using an already blended loose black tea chai:*

#### Hot Chai Ingredients:

- 2 tsp loose leaf chai (with a black tea base)
- 1 cup water or 8 ounces
- 1 cup milk or 8 ounces
- sugar or sweetener

1. Mix chai, water, and milk in a saucepan and bring barely to a boil, 212°F (100°C). Then, reduce the heat and simmer for up to 5 minutes.

2. Remove from heat and stir in sugar or sweetener to taste.

3. Strain into a mug or pitcher and enjoy!



Chai can also be enjoyed over ice:

When preparing to put it over ice, the recipe is in a different order so not to heat the milk: Use: 1 - 8 ounce cup and 1 - 12 ounce cup

#### Ice Chai Ingredients:

- 2 tsp. loose leaf chai blend spice or 2 sachets of chai blend with a black tea base.
- 2 cups or 16-ounces of water
- 1 cup or 8-ounces milk (or milk substitute)
- sugar or sweetener (or sugar substitute)
- 1 to 2 cinnamon sticks
- A pinch of cinnamon

1. Boil 2 cups of freshwater.

2. Put tea sachets or loose tea in the 8-ounce cup and pour only about a half cup (3 to 4 ounces) of hot water.

3. Let it steep for 5 minutes.

4. Remove tea sachets or strain the loose tea.

5. Let steeped chai cool to room temperature.

6. Put ice in the 12 ounce glass.

7. Add the cooled chai and milk in the 12-ounce cup with ice. This is where you can make the chai strong or lighter by adding more or less milk.

8. Stir in a pinch of sugar ( or alternative sweetener) to your desired amount.

9. Garnish with cinnamon sticks and a sprinkle of cinnamon on top

*Enjoy!*

For a slushy consistency, pour the chai, milk and ice cubes into a blender and blend for about 30 seconds.

*Here is a more traditional chai steeping method recipe to make a cup:*

Ingredients:

1 cup of water

1/2 cup whole milk

Granulated sugar to taste (about 2 heaping teaspoons per serving)

1 heaping tablespoon of loose black tea

And add any or all of the following spices:

4 cardamom pods smashed with the side of a knife

a small piece of cinnamon stick

1/4 coin of fresh ginger (one quartered thin slice of ginger)

pinch of fennel seeds about 10 seeds

1. Bring water and milk to a simmer with your spices in a medium saucepan.

2. Reduce heat to the lowest setting and add tea.

3. Stirring occasionally, steep until tea takes on a deep, pinky-tan color, or about 3 minutes.

4. Strain into a cup and stir in sugar to taste.

*Enjoy!*

You can experiment with this recipe and switch out the loose black tea with a tea of your choice, just adjust to the recommended steeping for that tea.

Chai with black tea base in a Tea Bag (CTC):

1 chai tea bag

6 to 8-ounces of water

1. Bring water to a boil, 212°F (100°C).

2. Place tea bag in the vessel. Pour 6-8 ounces of hot water in the vessel with the the tea bag.

3. Let steep 2 to 5 minutes.

4. Remove tea bag and add cream, milk, or milk substitute. The ratio of hot tea and added milk or milk substitute is a personal preference.

*Enjoy!*

#### Chai Storage:

A chai blend, just like any other tea blend, won't really go bad, but it can get stale. To ensure you're getting the freshest chai, purchase it from a reputable company or look to see if it is printed on the container when the chai was processed and packaged. Chai blends can stay fresh for up to a year.



