

TEA LOVERS

FOR LOVERS OF TEA SINCE 2001

Tea Information



History of Tea

The story of tea goes back as far as 2737 BC, during the reign of the Chinese Emperor Shun Nung. Shun Nung, known as the 'Divine Healer', always drank boiled water in the belief that it benefitted his health. Legend has it that one day, leaves from a nearby tree were blown into his bowl of hot water. Noting the delightful aroma, the Emperor tasted the beverage and declared it 'Heaven sent.'

Shen Nung (神農), drawing published in Zhongguo li dai ming yi tu zhuan (Biographies and portraits of Chinese famous doctors in past dynasties), 1987

Tea Production

Black tea is produced using one of two primary processing methods: the **Orthodox method** or the **CTC method** (Crush, Tear, Curl). Both follow the same five core stages:

1. Withering, 2. Rolling, 3. Fermenting (Oxidation), 4. Drying, and 5. Sorting — but the machinery and techniques used differ, resulting in distinct leaf styles and flavour profiles.

Note: The following methods apply specifically to black tea production. Other tea types, such as green, oolong, and white, are processed differently to control oxidation and achieve their unique characteristics.

Orthodox Method

Used for high-quality loose leaf teas where the structure of the whole leaf is preserved, allowing for more complex flavour development.



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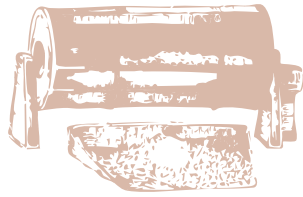
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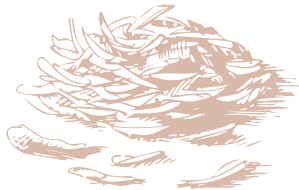
1. Withering

Freshly plucked tea leaves are spread out in ventilated troughs or trays, reducing moisture content by around 30%. This stage usually takes between 12 and 18 hours.



2. Rolling

Large rolling machines gently twist and roll the leaves, breaking the cell walls and releasing essential oils. This initiates oxidation and begins to develop the tea's aroma and flavour.



3. Fermenting *(Oxidation)*

As oxidation progresses, the leaf changes to a copper-red colour — a key indicator of proper fermentation. This stage takes approximately 2 to 3 hours and plays a critical role in shaping the final taste.



4. Drying *(Firing)*

Once the desired level of oxidation is reached, the leaves are dried in hot-air machines or ovens, usually heated to around 90°C. This halts oxidation, sets the flavour, and turns the tea black. Roughly 4 kg of green leaves yield 1 kg of finished black tea.



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5. Sorting

After drying, the tea is sifted into different grades using a series of sieves. These range from large whole-leaf teas to broken leaves, fannings, and dust.

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CTC Method *(Crush, Tear, Curl)*

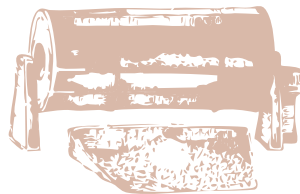
Primarily used for strong, fast-brewing black teas, especially in tea bags.



1. Withering

Like the orthodox method, moisture is reduced to prepare the leaves for processing.

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2. Rolling and Crushing

The leaves are rolled once, then passed through specialised CTC machines with thorned cylinders that crush, tear, and curl the leaves into small, uniform particles. Stems and leaf veins are removed, leaving only the core leaf matter for further processing.

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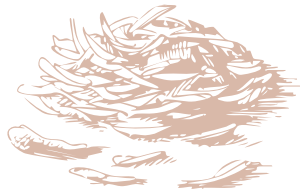
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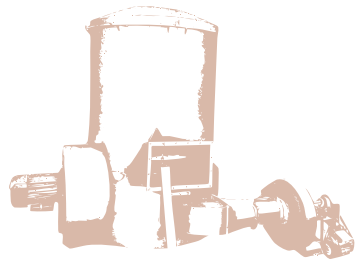
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3. Fermenting *(Oxidation)*

Oxidation begins immediately after crushing. Due to the small particle size, this step is fast and intense, producing a strong, brisk tea.



4. Drying

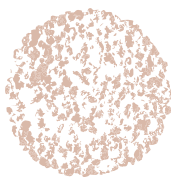
The oxidised particles are dried using hot-air machines until moisture content is reduced to about 6%.



5. Sorting

The dried tea is sorted into uniform grades, most commonly used in commercial tea bags due to their strong brew and quick infusion.

Leaf grades in CTC production



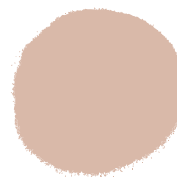
BP

Broken Pekoe



PF

Pekoe Fannings



PD

Pekoe Dust

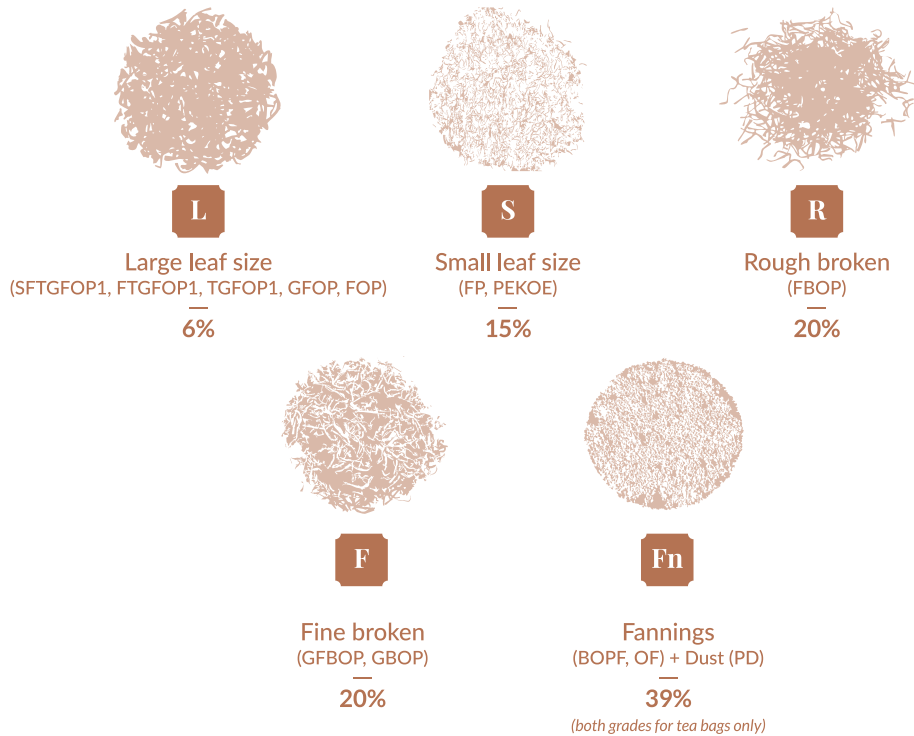


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Usual orthodox leaf grades percentages of total tea production



Types of Tea

BLACK TEA

- Fully-fermented tea (100% fermentation) which varies in appearance from broken to long black leaves. Infusing these leaves results in a dark coloured liquid – hence the name. Black tea is the most widely consumed tea in the world, especially in the West. Flavoured black tea, which is becoming increasingly popular, results from the addition of various ingredients such as flower petals, fruit peel and natural essences.



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OO LONG TEA



- Semi-fermented tea (10~70% fermentation). There are many varieties of oolong tea, the colours of the leaves range from dark green to green-brown, with infusions from honey-green to golden yellow. Flavours vary widely, from floral and fruity to creamy, savoury, or vegetal, depending on the style. Like green tea, oolong is rich in vitamin C and naturally full of flavour. Oolong is traditionally enjoyed in China's Fujian and Guangdong provinces, as well as Taiwan, known for producing some of the world's finest oolongs.

GREEN TEA



- There is no fermentation for green tea and it has jade-green coloured leaves. Liquid varies from green to yellow. Green teas are commonly consumed in Korea, Japan, The Middle East and North Africa – All areas of high meat consumption. Green tea is a good way to offset the effects of a diet high in animal protein and too low in fresh produce. In addition, green tea is a good source of natural antioxidants and contains plant polyphenols and vitamin C.

JASMINE TEA



- This popular tea is generally made from either green or quality white teas. Well known as a classic tea served in many Asian restaurants, it has a light floral taste which is ideal as a refreshing accompaniment to meals.



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WHITE TEA

- There is no fermentation for white tea and it is the least processed of all teas. It has long slender white leaves, which result in a clean, ivory liquid. White tea comes from the youngest, most tender leaves of the tea tree and gets its name from the fine silver hair that covers them. Most white tea is harvested carefully by hand in China and Taiwan. Because white tea is not rolled (nor processed as much as other teas), it retains its chlorophyll, which is why we are hearing more and more reports of the health benefits of white tea. This is also considered by tea connoisseurs to be the finest of all teas.



WATER GARDEN TEA

- A high quality white tea that is a drinkable work of art for those special moments. Watch as each exotic green/white tea ball blossoms into a fragrant sea of premium silver needle leaf tips with a centre of hand-beaded flowers. Each tea ball can serve up to 8 ~ 10 cups of quality tea.



PU-ERH TEA

- Fully-fermented tea which can be loose leaf or compressed. Geographically, Assam and Pu-erh are not particularly far away from each other, explaining why Pu-erh has a similar strength and pepperiness to Assam tea. Tea producers in Pu-erh add an earthy flavour to their tea by fermenting it twice and then storing it to give it time to mature. The brew produced is dark and strong and is said to be very healthy and good for digestion and weight loss. The older the Pu-erh tea, the more expensive it is.



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COMPRESSED TEA

• Compressed tea is made by packing green, oolong or black processed tea leaves tightly together into balls, cakes or bricks. The balls are available in different sizes and are sometimes wrapped in dried grasses. The cakes are made in several forms: tiny little nests each wrapped carefully in paper, larger bird's nest shapes individually packaged in cloth or paper, or large or small flat round slabs. Flat rectangular bricks are hydraulically made using very fine tea dust. On one side is usually a typical Chinese design of a temple or gateway, and on the other are markings that divide the slab into small portions rather like a block of chocolate.



TEA BLENDS

• Teas that are ideal to drink in their pure state are not as common as those that are used to create blended tea varieties. Blending allows you to create more complex and pleasurable tea flavour profiles. Hence the challenge...How to come up with the perfect blend? - Aiming to achieve the ideal marriage of colour, aroma and flavour. Starting point is coming up with a particular flavour profile you are wanting to create, then determining the right combination and percentage of tea and/or flavour ingredient that combines to make the ideal recipe.



FLAVOURED TEA

• Tea is often blended with other natural ingredients such as herbs, flower petals, fruit peel and seeds, a tradition that goes back a long way. In the Arab world, green and black teas are often flavoured with mint, while Indians make Chai by boiling black tea leaves with cardamom and other spices, sugar and milk. The idea of flavoured teas is highly fashionable in North America and Europe, where an extensive range is available - From apricot, caramel & mango through to peach, toffee and vanilla. Flavour is normally added either in the form of granules which release their flavour slowly into the tea, or as a liquid that is sprayed onto the leaves while they are tumbled in a large drum.



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DECAFFEINATED TEA

- Our tea is decaffeinated using the CO₂ high-pressure method — one of the most advanced and natural processes available. This technique uses carbon dioxide, a harmless compound found in the air, to gently remove caffeine while protecting the tea's flavour and aroma. Though there is minimal loss of raw material, the result is a smooth, full-bodied tea with rich colour and no unwanted aftertaste.



FRUIT INFUSIONS

- A vibrant blend of berries, apple, citrus peel, rose hips, and more, finished with natural flavour essences. These caffeine-free, sugar-free infusions are high in vitamin C and taste delicious hot or iced.



HERBAL INFUSIONS

- Herbal remedies have been around for a long time all over the world and have long been valued for their beneficial properties i.e. diuretic, digestive and calming. Herbal infusions are not technically tea, but are a blend of selected herbs designed to improve your well-being by targeting specific health problems



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ROOIBOS/HONEYBUSH

- This South African tea has a fine needle-like leaf. The production of this tea is much the same as black tea. Rooibos comes in green and red varieties. Green rooibos is unfermented, and red rooibos is fermented. Rooibos or honeybush does not contain caffeine, artificial colours, preservatives and is low in tannin. It is suitable for both adults and children. While it is high in antioxidants, it also contains calcium, iron, potassium and fluoride.

NB: Always check the ingredient list prior to trying. Some herbs, such as St. John's Wort, are known to interact with certain medications. Others, such as liquorice root, are not recommended for certain conditions such as pregnancy or hypertension.

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Tea Storage



The worst thing for tea is exposure to heat, light and moisture - So always store your tea in a cool, dry place away from direct sunlight.

As tea absorbs other aromas easily, keep it well away from strong-smelling foods and beverages and store individual teas in sealed tins, airtight if possible.

When making tea, always use a spoon to collect your tea, not your hand. Follow the above storage instructions and most teas will remain fresh and full of flavour for up to 12 months.

Tea Grades



CTC

C: Crush, T: Tear, C: Curl. Small round leaf.

PEKOE (P)

Shorter pieces of leaf than Orange Pekoe.

ORANGE PEKOE (OP)

Long, pointed leaves, plucked just as the buds open into leaf.

BROKEN ORANGE PEKOE (BOP)

Smaller, broken leaf particles that produce a stronger, brisker brew than whole leaf grades.



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FLOWERY ORANGE PEKOE (FOP)

High-quality tea made from the end bud and one new leaf.

GOLDEN FLOWERY ORANGE PEKOE (GFOP)

The same as Flowery Orange Pekoe but with lots of little golden tips (these are the lighter-coloured ends of the buds and leaves that do not darken during manufacture).

TIPPY GOLDEN FLOWERY ORANGE PEKOE (TGFOP)

Flowery Orange Pekoe with a higher proportion of tips.

FINEST TIPPY GOLDEN FLOWERY ORANGE PEKOE (FTGFOP)

Exceptionally high-quality tea with plenty of little golden tips.

SUPERIOR FINE TIPPY GOLDEN FLOWERY ORANGE PEKOE (SFTGFOP)

The highest grade of Orthodox whole-leaf tea, rich in golden tips and complex flavour.

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More Tea Terms

ASSAM

Located in Northern India, Assam is the world's largest black tea producing region. Depending on personal taste, Assam teas can be drunk on their own or with milk and sugar. They are known for their distinctive fragrant malt qualities.

DARJEELING

Nestled in the foothills of the Himalayas. During the monsoon season, the unpredictable weather can produce up to 16ft of rain. During the growing season, a yield of at least 3 flushes is common due to the hot days and cool nights.

CEYLON

Currently known as Sri Lanka, was once renowned only for its coffee. This changed in 1867 when Scotsman James Taylor planted 19 acres of tea plant seeds and from there an exciting new industry was formed. Ceylon is now the producer of superb teas.

CHINA

China is synonymous with tea and has been producing it for centuries. With growing global demand for premium teas, China is expanding its market share. After silk and grain, tea is now the country's third-largest export. Historically, the Chinese classified over 8,000 tea types. Today, tea is grown across 18 regions, mostly green tea, and is typically sold under names that reflect its origin and quality. While mechanisation is changing production, handmade teas remain common thanks to China's large workforce and deep-rooted tea tradition.

FLUSHES

The new growth of leaves and buds on a tea plant. On average there are usually 3 flushes, however due to year-round hot weather, some temperate regions can produce up to 10 flushes.



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ORTHODOX

Refers to the traditional method of carefully hand-picking and processing tea. This method has been used for centuries, and many premium teas are still made this way today.

CTC

(Crush, Tear, Curl) A modern, mechanised method of tea production valued for its speed and consistency, especially in commercial-grade teas.

CAMELLIA SINENSIS

A shrubby evergreen tree native to Southeast Asia, is a relative of the common garden Camellia. The top few leaves and sometimes the new buds of this plant are what 'tea' is comprised of. If it doesn't originate from this plant then it is not 'tea'. When it is allowed to

grow of its own accord, the tea plant can reach heights of 60 feet. As a tea bush, it is usually kept pruned to heights of no more than 3–5 feet and produces black, green and oolong teas. It is the different processing of the leaf that makes the different tea varieties.

POLYPHENOLS

Are a group of naturally occurring plant chemicals that account for the pungency and unique flavour of tea. This component of tea accounts for approximately 30% of the soluble matter. We have learnt through modern science that these compounds are powerful anti-oxidants, immune stimulants and potent cancer fighters. Therefore tea is known for being a highly beneficial daily beverage that improves human health.

ANTIOXIDANT

Is the substance that can protect cells from damage caused by free radicals. Free radicals are unstable molecules made by oxidation during normal metabolism. It is believed that free radicals may play a part in diseases such as cancer, heart problems, stroke and other diseases associated with ageing.

CHLOROPHYLL

The pigment in tea leaves that absorbs sunlight and helps the plant synthesise carbohydrates from carbon dioxide and water, supporting leaf growth and overall tea quality.

TANNIN

A necessary component in the ageing of wine. It is found in the skin of grapes and can be supplemented by oak tannins from barrels. In the terms of tasting, it identifies a dry sensation with flavours of tea and leather.

WITHERING

Is the process that removes moisture from the freshly plucked leaf. For a period of 24hrs, leaves spread onto trays are left in a cool room. The leaf by this stage will have lost about 50% of its weight and is now soft and pliable, which makes it ready for the next stage.

ROLLING

The twisting of the leaf results in bruising, which in turn releases enzymes that react to the air. This chemical process is called oxidation. As a twisted leaf releases its essences slower than a flat leaf, it makes a smoother and milder tasting cup of tea.



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FERMENTATION

Is the process that applies mainly to black tea. After the withered and rolled leaves are spread out on a table, they are allowed to ferment for up to 5 hrs. This does not apply at all to green tea, and a lesser period applies for Oolong tea. The longer a leaf ferments, the darker it becomes. The flavour of the tea is altered in this process, allowing the true elements to be released, resulting in the ultimate cup of tea.

FIRING

The fermented leaves are heated to a constant temperature of 120F, thereby stopping the fermentation process. This is a critical part in the making of black tea. Oolong and green teas are fired for a shorter period of time. This process is where black tea turns black and only retains 2-3% of its original moisture content. Too much heat can produce a tea lacking in flavour, colour and aroma.

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Tea and Caffeine

Caffeine, a member of the xanthine family of chemicals, is naturally present in coffee, cocoa, tea and many other plants. It is slightly bitter to the taste and is extremely soluble in hot water. This means that the caffeine naturally occurring in tea is released through steeping in hot water.

Caffeine, in moderation, can have positive effects on the body, including boosting awareness and stimulating metabolism. It can also improve your mood by boosting dopamine levels. Negative effects of consuming too much caffeine can include insomnia, nervousness, irritability, fast heartbeat and upset stomach...to name a few.

Despite some of the negative publicity that has surfaced about caffeine, a moderate intake of caffeine equal to 300mg per day (or six cups of tea) shows no evidence of detrimental side effects in most adults. Consequently, the average adult can easily drink three to four cups of tea per day and still remain well within the consumption level considered safe. However, some adults experience sensitivity to caffeine, and therefore may want to limit their intake.

Every tea contains caffeine, and many different factors such as the chemistry of the soil, altitude and the type of tea plant, help to determine the amount of caffeine present in the leaf. On average black tea contains around 47mg of caffeine per 240ml cup and green tea contains around 30mg. Black tea has on average about ½ the amount of caffeine of a black coffee and green tea has around a 1/3 of the caffeine. The longer you steep the tea, the more caffeine that will be released.

We hope you have enjoyed learning more about tea with us!



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