

A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a small, ornate metal cup filled with dark tea. The cup has intricate scrollwork patterns. The person's left hand is visible, wearing a large, ornate ring. The background is dark and out of focus.

MAGIC HOUR

THE MAGIC OF  
PUERH & BLACK TEA

Magic Hour Tea School Class #4

[www.clubmagichour.com](http://www.clubmagichour.com)

# WELCOME!



WELCOME TO CLASS 4 OF THE MAGIC HOUR SCHOOL OF TEA!

I'M OVER THE MOON TO SPEND THIS PRECIOUS TIME WITH YOU LEARNING  
AND GROWING OUR MINDFULNESS, ABILITY TO TASTE MORE NUANCE AND  
TRAVEL THE WORLD THROUGH TEA!

PLEASE HAVE YOUR KIT READY FOR CLASS, A WATER BOILER, VESSEL, SPOON  
FOR MEASURING (OR GRAM SCALE), AND AN OPEN MIND! PLEASE ALSO  
ENSURE YOU EAT SOMETHING BEFORE WE BEGIN SO YOUR TUMMY IS NOT  
EMPTY FOR ALL OF THE AMAZING TEAS WE WILL BE TASTING AND LEARNING  
ABOUT.

HERE'S TO YOUR HEALTH, ABUNDANCE AND KNOWLEDGE!  
ZHENA

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# Meet your Teacher



I'm Zhenia, founder and master blender at Magic Hour. I came to tea through a calling of spirit and have been in its care ever since. Tea is a meditation, a plant and a lifestyle, all of which can help you become more vital and present to your daily life. I'm so happy you've joined me on this journey of tea, may you enjoy every sip!



ZHENIA MUZYKA

FOUNDER & MASTER TEA BLENDER

# RESOURCES

PLEASE FIND THE INFORMATION FOR OUR LIVE TEA CLASS  
AS WELL AS INFORMATION TO REWATCH  
THE RECORDINGS BELOW:

## LIVE COURSE INFORMATION:

OUR LIVE COURSE WILL BEGIN AT 8AM PST ON SEPT 23RD, 2023

PLEASE JOIN THE WEBINAR WITH THE LINK BELOW:

**[HTTPS://US06WEB.ZOOM.US/WEBINAR/REGISTER/WN\\_CEKXCLYFS5  
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THIS IS A CLOSED EVENT! BE SURE TO HAVE THIS PASSCODE  
HANDY WHEN JOINING: 092323

WEBINAR ID: 827 9373 2434

## TO REWATCH YOUR COURSE:

PLEASE ALLOW 2-3 DAYS FOR THE COURSE RECORDING TO BECOME  
AVAILABLE ON OUR MYSTERIES OF GREEN TEA SHOWCASE BELOW:

**[HTTPS://VIMEO.COM/SHOWCASE/10652098](https://vimeo.com/showcase/10652098)**

THESE VIDEOS ARE ONLY ACCESSIBLE WITH THE PASSWORD  
(CASE SENSITIVE): BLACKTEA2023



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WHAT'S INSIDE

# THE COMPOUNDS IN TEA ARE A HEALTH MIRACLE

**CAMELLIA SINENSIS, ALSO KNOWN AS THE TEA PLANT,  
CONTAINS VARIOUS COMPOUNDS INCLUDING:**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>1. Caffeine: a stimulant that is responsible for the energizing effects of tea.</p> <p>2. Theophylline: a bronchodilator that can help to alleviate asthma symptoms.</p> <p>3. L-Theanine: an amino acid that promotes relaxation and has been linked to reducing stress and anxiety.</p> <p>4. Epigallocatechin gallate (EGCG): a polyphenol antioxidant that has been linked to numerous health benefits, including improved heart health and reduced risk of certain types of cancer.</p> <p>5. Polyphenols: a group of antioxidants that may have anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer properties.</p> | <p>6. Flavonoids: a type of polyphenol that has been shown to have numerous health benefits, including reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease.</p> <p>7. Theaflavins: a type of flavonoid that is formed during the oxidation of tea leaves and has been shown to have numerous health benefits, including reducing cholesterol levels.</p> <p>8. Vitamins: tea is a good source of vitamins including vitamin C, vitamin B1, vitamin B2, and vitamin E.</p> <p>9. Minerals: tea is also a good source of minerals, such as potassium, magnesium, and manganese.</p> |
|--|---|



Studies have shown that tea is not only of benefit to our bodies but also tea has been known to increase our bonds with others. Offering someone a cup of tea is an invitation to share in their lives and to deepen our relationships. To have a cup of tea with your mate or a loved one or colleague brings a form of magic into the connection you have with one another and science has now proven what our hearts have always known—to be close to others is to be less lonely and this will actually help to increase the quality and length of your life!

Science has shown that having strong relationships and friendships can have positive effects on our physical and mental health. Research has found that people with strong social connections are more likely to live longer, have lower levels of stress, and experience better overall health outcomes than those who are socially isolated. For example, one study found that people with strong social relationships have a 50% greater likelihood of survival compared to those with weaker social connections.

Having close friends and social support can also improve mental health outcomes, such as reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety, increasing feelings of happiness and well-being, and improving self-esteem.

Additionally, social relationships can have a positive impact on physical health outcomes such as blood pressure, immune function, and recovery from illness. For example, people with strong social support may be less likely to develop heart disease and have better outcomes after heart surgery.

Overall, it is clear that having strong relationships and friendships can have a significant impact on our health and well-being. It is important to cultivate and maintain these connections throughout our lives for better health outcomes.

I came to tea first as it was how my grandmother taught me about nature. She'd make us a cup of tea with herbs and flowers from her garden and tell me stories of the old country—Ukraine. She taught me that tea not only helps our bodies but transforms our experience of time and emotions as she'd escaped WWII and used herbs to heal herself as she walked from eastern Ukraine to Germany while foraging herbs and botanicals along the way.

# CAMELLIA SINENSIS TEA

## THE PROCESS

Tea is typically grown in warm, humid regions with well-drained soil and plenty of rainfall. The majority of tea production takes place in Asia, particularly in China, India, Sri Lanka, and Japan.

### HERE IS A GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS OF GROWING TEA:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Planting: Tea is typically propagated from seeds or cuttings. Seedlings are planted in rows, usually on hillsides or sloping terrain to ensure good drainage.</p> <p>2. Pruning: After planting, the tea bushes are pruned to encourage branching and promote new growth.</p> <p>3. Harvesting: The timing of the harvest depends on the type of tea being produced. For example, black tea is typically harvested when the leaves are fully grown, while green tea is harvested when the leaves are still young and tender- the spring harvests are the best for green tea while I prefer summer or fall harvest black teas!</p> | <p>4. Withering: After harvesting, the tea leaves are spread out to wither, which allows them to lose some of their moisture and become more pliable.</p> <p>5. Rolling: The withered leaves are rolled to break down their cell walls and release their flavors.</p> <p>6. Oxidation: Depending on the type of tea being produced, the rolled leaves are either allowed to oxidize (as with black tea) or steamed to prevent oxidation (as with green tea).</p> <p>7. Drying: Finally, the leaves are dried to stop the oxidation process and reduce their moisture content. They are then sorted and packaged for sale.</p> |
|---|---|



Throughout the growing process, tea plants require careful maintenance, including regular watering, fertilization, and pest control. The quality of the tea produced can be influenced by factors such as the weather, soil conditions, and cultivation techniques.

How old are tea bushes before they can be harvested?

Tea bushes typically need to mature for at least three years before they can be harvested for commercial tea production. During the first year of growth, the tea plant focuses on establishing its root system and developing its leaves, while in the second year, it continues to develop its leaves and begins to produce small buds.

By the third year, the tea plant has established a strong root system and is capable of producing enough leaves to be harvested. However, the quality of the tea produced from younger plants may not be as high as that produced from more mature plants, as the leaves may not have developed the full range of flavors and aromas that come with maturity.

Some types of tea, such as pu-erh tea, may be made from older tea bushes, which can be several decades or even centuries old. These older plants are believed to produce a more complex and nuanced tea flavor.



# HOW BLACK TEAS ARE MADE

**Black tea is a fully oxidized tea that is known for its strong, bold flavor and dark color. The production of black tea typically involves the following steps:**

- **Withering:** The freshly picked tea leaves are spread out in a thin layer to wilt and wither for several hours. This step helps to reduce the water content of the leaves and make them more pliable.
- **Rolling:** The withered leaves are then rolled to break down their cell walls and release their juices. This step also helps to further reduce the water content of the leaves.
- **Oxidation:** The rolled leaves are spread out and allowed to oxidize for several hours or overnight, depending on the desired level of oxidation. During this process, the leaves turn dark brown and develop a rich flavor and aroma.
- **Firing:** Once the desired level of oxidation is achieved, the leaves are fired in a high-temperature oven or pan to stop the oxidation process and dry the leaves. This step also helps to lock in the flavor and aroma of the tea.
- **Sorting and grading:** After firing, the tea leaves are sorted by size and shape, and graded based on their quality.
- **Packaging and shipping:** The final step is to package the tea and ship it to retailers or wholesalers for sale.

The specific techniques used to produce black tea can vary depending on the region and the preferences of the tea producer. Some black teas, such as Darjeeling, are produced using techniques similar to those used to produce oolong tea, while others, such as Assam, are produced using a method known as "crush, tear, curl" (CTC), which involves shredding the leaves into small pieces to produce a more robust flavor.

## PU-ERH (DARK-TEA) PROCESSING

**Pu-erh tea is a unique type of fermented tea that is produced in Yunnan Province, China. The production process involves the following steps:**

- **Withering:** Freshly harvested tea leaves are spread out in the sun or in a climate-controlled room to wither and reduce their moisture content.
- **Rolling:** The withered leaves are then rolled to break down their cell walls and release their juices. This step also helps to shape the leaves into the desired form.
- **Sun-drying:** The rolled leaves are then spread out in the sun to dry, which prepares them for the next stage of the fermentation process.
- **Wet-piling:** The dried leaves are moistened and piled up in a warm, humid environment for several weeks to undergo microbial fermentation. During this process, bacteria and fungi break down the leaves' organic compounds, resulting in a unique flavor and aroma profile.
- **Post-fermentation:** After wet-piling, the tea leaves are typically aged for several years or even decades to allow them to continue fermenting and develop more complex flavors and aromas.
- **Sorting and packaging:** Once the fermentation and aging process is complete, the tea leaves are sorted by size and quality and packaged for sale.

Pu-erh tea can be produced in several different forms, including loose-leaf tea, compressed tea cakes, and bricks. The specific techniques used to produce Pu-erh tea can vary depending on the region and the preferences of the tea producer, resulting in a wide range of flavors and aromas.





# SAMPLING BLACK TEAS

## TIPS FROM A TEA TASTER

The world of tea is an endless, captivating journey that keeps evolving. It's like an ever-changing tapestry of flavors and aromas, where every sip brings a delightful surprise. Just when you think you've got a tea all figured out, a new harvest comes along, and it's a whole new experience. So, if you're into variety, you're in the perfect place.

There's no need to strive for tea-tasting perfection. In my experience, the key is to savor each moment with the curiosity of a beginner. Let yourself be one with the tea, allowing it to speak to your senses. Your taste buds are like chameleons, ever-adapting and shifting with each tasting.

**So how to taste tea is up to you but there are a few simple rules.**

1. Slurp—yep you got it, slurp so you aerate your mouth as the tea hits your palate, this will help you taste the full range of nuances and incorporate your olfactory sense to the fullest. I love this part and will show you how to do it with gusto.
2. Be quiet—keep your flavor notes to yourself at first as you will then open up the opportunities to learn, write down your impressions instead of speaking them out loud. When all the tasters have tasted then you can discuss and re-taste with their feedback in mind too—this is how we learn, we learn by tasting with others and expanding our language and repertoire.
3. Taste the tea until you feel you've "got it" you'll have the experience of a "click" and you'll have understood the tea then, write it all down and share once everyone has tasted, there's no more lively conversation than a tea-tasting one!

# IMPORTANCE OF STEEPING TIMES & WATER TEMPERATURE

I really love tasting tea and I know you do too as you've joined me here. One thing I want to accentuate before we taste is the importance of water, temperature, and steep times. I use very well-filtered spring water or even distilled sometimes. While each tea has a unique steep essence, these are the general best practices for each.

**When it comes to steeping full-leaf fine teas, there are a few ideal details to consider:**

1. **Water Temperature:** Each tea has an ideal temperature so definitely either use a temperature-controlled water boiler or a thermometer if you're not confident yet in allowing the water to cool to an ideal state.
2. **Steeping Time:** The ideal steeping time for full-leaf teas vary from 1-5 minutes, but the average for green tea is around 2 to 3 minutes. Over-steeping the tea leads to a bitter taste as more tannins and caffeine are extracted. People who say they don't like tea usually do end up liking it when it's steeped correctly!
3. **Tea-to-Water Ratio:** The ideal tea-to-water ratio is around 1 teaspoon of loose-leaf tea per 8 ounces of water. Adjust the ratio according to your taste preferences.
4. **Teapot or Infuser:** A teapot or infuser can be used to steep the tea. If using an infuser, be sure to leave enough room for the tea leaves to expand. That's why I love the Midas Touch strainer, it is big enough for all of the leaves to expand freely.
5. **Quality of Water:** Use high-quality water that is free of chlorine or other impurities for the best taste. I love to use the Miyabi Charcoal for my tea water as it not only purifies it but then it re-mineralizes it!

## **BLACK TEA:**

- The ideal temperature for steeping black tea is around 200°F (93°C). Steeping time for full-leaf black tea is between 3 and 5 minutes. Over-steeping the tea can lead to a bitter taste.

# BLACK TEA HEALTH BENEFITS

Black tea is one of the most popular beverages consumed globally and is the base of East Indian Chai, the popular UK “English Breakfast” and countless other classic blends like Earl Grey. It’s a rich source of flavonoids, which are compounds with antioxidant properties that have been shown to provide several health benefits.

1. Cardiovascular health: Regular consumption of black tea has been associated with a lower risk of cardiovascular disease. The flavonoids in black tea are thought to improve endothelial function and reduce blood pressure, which can help reduce the risk of heart disease. (1)
2. Cognitive function: Black tea contains caffeine, which is a natural stimulant that can improve cognitive function, including alertness, attention, and memory. It also contains L-theanine, an amino acid that can help reduce stress and anxiety, leading to better cognitive performance. (2)
3. Diabetes prevention: Studies suggest that regular consumption of black tea may help reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes. The flavonoids in black tea have been shown to improve insulin sensitivity and reduce inflammation, which are key factors in the development of diabetes. (3)
4. Digestive health: Black tea contains tannins, which have been shown to have antimicrobial properties that can help promote a healthy balance of gut bacteria. Additionally, tannins can help reduce inflammation in the digestive tract and alleviate symptoms of diarrhea and other digestive issues. (4)
5. Oral health: Black tea has been shown to have a positive effect on oral health, including reducing the risk of tooth decay and gum disease. The polyphenols in black tea can help inhibit the growth of bacteria in the mouth and prevent the formation of plaque. (5)

## References:

1. Arab L, Liu W, Elashoff D. Green and black tea consumption and risk of stroke: a meta-analysis. *Stroke*. 2009;40(5):1786-92.
2. Einöther SJ, Martens VE. Acute effects of tea consumption on attention and mood. *Am J Clin Nutr*. 2013;98(6 Suppl):1700S-8S.
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5. Khan N, Mukhtar H. Tea polyphenols for health promotion. *Life Sci*. 2007;81(7):519-33.



## PU-ERH HEALTH BENEFITS

Pu-erh tea is a double-fermented tea which I refer to as “the yogurt of tea” as it has added friendly bacteria and probiotics because of the way it is fermented in “piles.” Considered the most medicinal of teas in China by the Chinese, my experience of this tea in China is that everyone uses it as an antidote to fatty meals and after drinking any type of alcohol. Used medicinally, this tea helps with fatty liver and I’ve always called it, “Sin Eraser” because I’ve seen people eat massive amounts of pork and Peking Duck in China, wash it down with Johnny Walker while smoking cigarettes and then drink Puerh after and “poof” they seem clear and their health is vibrant. I drink this daily for good reason, even though I don’t eat pork or drink whiskey!

It is a rich source of polyphenols and other natural compounds that have been shown to provide several health benefits. Here are some of the scientifically studied detailed health benefits of pu-erh tea:

**Digestive health:** Pu-erh tea has been shown to have a positive effect on digestive health. It can help regulate bowel movements and alleviate symptoms of digestive disorders such as constipation, bloating, and nausea. The tea's beneficial effects are thought to be due to its ability to improve gut microbiota and stimulate the production of digestive enzymes. (1)

**Cholesterol and blood sugar management:** Pu-erh tea has been shown to have a positive effect on blood lipids and glucose levels. Regular consumption of pu-erh tea can help reduce LDL cholesterol levels, improve HDL cholesterol levels, and lower blood sugar levels in people with diabetes. (2)

**Weight loss:** Studies suggest that pu-erh tea may help with weight loss by increasing metabolism, promoting fat oxidation, and reducing fat absorption. The tea's beneficial effects are thought to be due to its ability to inhibit the activity of pancreatic lipase, an enzyme that helps break down dietary fat. (3)

**Cardiovascular health:** Pu-erh tea has been shown to have a positive effect on cardiovascular health by reducing blood pressure, improving lipid profile, and reducing the risk of atherosclerosis. The tea's beneficial effects are thought to be due to its ability to improve endothelial function, reduce inflammation, and improve antioxidant status. (4)

**Liver health:** Pu-erh tea has been shown to have a positive effect on liver health by reducing oxidative stress, inflammation, and fibrosis. Regular consumption of pu-erh tea can help improve liver function and reduce the risk of liver disease. (5)

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1. Gong H, Chen K, Chen L, et al. Pu-erh tea polysaccharides alleviate constipation and modulate gut microbiota in mice. *J Agric Food Chem*. 2018;66(8):1943-1953.
2. Li X, Zhou H, Yang Y, et al. Effect of Pu-erh tea on lipid metabolism and atherosclerosis in vitro and in vivo. *Nutr Metab (Lond)*. 2019;16:18.
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# BLACK TEA REGIONS

In the world of tea, each sip tells a story, and every cup is a journey through the landscapes and cultures that nurture this beloved beverage. Among the various tea types, black tea stands as a testament to the diversity and complexity that can be found within a single category. One of the most intriguing aspects of black tea is how it takes on distinct personalities, flavors, and characteristics based on the region where it is grown.

From the mist-covered mountains of China to the lush plantations of India, from the rolling hills of Sri Lanka to the highlands of Africa, black tea has found a home in diverse terrains across the globe. Each of these regions contributes its unique terroir, climate, and traditions to the art of black tea production, resulting in a kaleidoscope of flavors that can captivate the senses.





# CHINESE BLACK TEAS

China is the birthplace of tea and home to the most revered, rare and complex black teas. Today we'll taste highlighted iconic black and Puerh (double fermented) teas from the lands of mystical, ancient tea gardens.

China is renowned for its diverse range of teas, including black tea (known as "hong cha" in Chinese), which is produced in various regions of the country. Different regions have unique terroirs that influence the taste, aroma, and character of the teas produced there. Here, we'll explore some of the well-known regions and the characteristics of the black teas they produce:

## **YUNNAN (YUNNAN BLACK TEA / DIAN HONG)**

**Location:** Southwestern China

**Character:** Dian Hong is known for its large, twisted, and sometimes golden or fuzzy leaves. The tea has a rich, full-bodied character.

**Flavor:** It often exhibits flavors of chocolate, malt, and sweet potato, with a floral or fruity aroma. It can have a pleasant sweetness with a slightly spicy finish.

**Examples:** Yunnan Gold (Jin Ya), Yunnan Pure Gold (Jin Jun Mei).

# CHINESE BLACK TEAS

## FUJIAN (LAPSANG SOUCHONG, JIN JUN MEI)

**Location:** Southeastern China

**Character:** Lapsang Souchong: Traditionally smoke-dried over pinewood fires, which gives it a distinctive smoky aroma.

**Jin Jun Mei:** A high-end black tea, known for its delicate, slender golden tips.

**Flavor:** Lapsang Souchong: It has a robust, smoky flavor, sometimes accompanied by notes of pine resin or tar.

## ANHUI (KEEMUN)

**Location:** Eastern China

**Character:** Keemun teas are known for their fine, tightly twisted leaves that yield a wine-colored liquor.

**Flavor:** The tea offers a floral and slightly smoky aroma, with flavors that can range from fruity (think apple or plum) to cocoa, with a hint of floral sweetness.

**Examples:** Keemun Hao Ya, Keemun Mao Feng.

## **SIN ERASER (PU-ERH)**

### HERE ARE SOME DETAILS ABOUT THIS TEA:

Puerh is lusciously unique, double fermented black tea. (We like to think of it as black tea and beyond). Although the Chinese have known Puerh's amazing benefits for centuries, it became a prized discovery among Western tea lovers fairly recently. Only the leaves coming from the province of Yunnan and put under a strictly controlled fermentation process are to be called pu-erh; after spending 5 long years in warm and moist cellars, the tea develops its unique, wine-like taste.

#### **Production Process:**

- Pu-erh black tea, renowned for its unique character, undergoes plucking, withering, rolling, oxidation, and the final step of fermentation, which contributes to its exceptional qualities.

#### **How does the flavor differ from other styles of black tea?**

- Pu-erh black tea boasts a flavor profile that distinguishes it with its earthy and complex notes, setting it apart from the more straightforward taste of other black teas. Its fermentation process imparts depth and richness to the brew.

#### **Origin:**

- This distinctive black tea originates from the ancient tea forests of Yunnan, China, where centuries-old traditions and natural terroir converge to create a tea of remarkable depth.

#### **Brewing Instructions:**

- To brew Pu-erh black tea, use water heated to approximately 195-205°F (90-96°C) and steep for 3-5 minutes, adjusting steeping times to achieve your desired strength.

#### **Tasting Notes:**

- Savor the earthy and complex qualities of Pu-erh black tea, often featuring notes of soil, aged wood, and a hint of sweetness, creating a deep and memorable cup.

#### **Scent Notes:**

- The aroma is earthy and woody, with a subtle sweetness that mirrors the character of the tea's origins in Yunnan's ancient tea forests, making each steeping an immersive and intriguing experience.

## **PU-ERH TOU-CHA “BIRDS NEST”**

### HERE ARE SOME DETAILS ABOUT THIS TEA:

Nestled within the ancient tea forests of Yunnan, China, a unique treasure awaits—Pu-erh Tou-Cha “Bird’s Nest” black tea. This exceptional tea captivates with its compact, nest-like form, concealing a world of flavors and traditions within.

#### **Production Process:**

- Pu-erh tou-cha “Bird’s Nest” black tea, known for its compact form, undergoes a unique production process involving plucking, withering, rolling, sun-drying, and aging, creating its distinctive shape and character.

#### **How does the flavor differ from other styles of black tea?**

- Pu-erh tou-cha “Bird’s Nest” stands apart with its smooth and earthy flavor profile, distinguishing it from the bolder and more astringent qualities of other black teas. Its aging process adds complexity and depth to the brew.

#### **Origin:**

- This tea is rooted in Yunnan, China, where the terroir and the art of fermentation contribute to its unique characteristics.

#### **Brewing Instructions:**

- To brew Pu-erh tou-cha “Bird’s Nest” black tea, use water heated to approximately 195-205°F (90-96°C). Steep for 3-5 minutes, adjusting steeping times according to your desired strength.

#### **Tasting Notes:**

- Relish the smooth and earthy qualities of Pu-erh tou-cha “Bird’s Nest,” often marked by hints of wood, moss, and a subtle sweetness, providing a nuanced and memorable cup.

#### **Scent Notes:**

- The aroma carries earthy and woody notes, accompanied by a gentle sweetness, evoking images of Yunnan’s lush landscapes and ancient tea traditions, making it an intriguing and immersive tea experience.



# LAPSANG SOUCHONG

## HERE ARE SOME DETAILS ABOUT THIS TEA:

In the heart of China's Fujian province, nestled amidst the Wuyi Mountains, lies a tea as bold as it is distinctive—Lapsang Souchong. This remarkable black tea stands out for its unparalleled smokiness, a flavor profile that sets it apart from the subtler nuances of its counterparts.

### **Production Process:**

- Lapsang Souchong black tea, celebrated for its smoky character, undergoes plucking, withering, rolling, oxidation, and the distinctive final step—smoking the tea leaves over pine wood fires.

### **How does the flavor differ from other styles of black tea?**

- Lapsang Souchong's flavor stands apart with its bold and assertive smokiness, a stark contrast to the subtler profiles of other black teas. It carries an intriguing interplay of smoky, woody, and sometimes earthy notes.

### **Origin:**

- This distinct black tea traces its roots to the Wuyi Mountains in China's Fujian province, where its signature smoky aroma is crafted through a unique smoking process.

### **Brewing Instructions:**

- To brew Lapsang Souchong black tea, use water heated to about 185-205°F (85-96°C) and steep for 3-4 minutes, adjusting the steeping time for your desired strength.

### **Tasting Notes:**

- Immerse yourself in the bold and smoky world of Lapsang Souchong, where the dominant smokiness is complemented by woody and earthy undertones, creating a robust and unforgettable cup.

### **Scent Notes:**

- The aroma is unmistakably smoky, evoking images of pine wood fires, with hints of earthiness and a touch of woody warmth, making it a unique and memorable tea experience.

## 2023 KEEMUN MAO FENG QING MING

Keemun Mao Feng Qing Ming" is a premium grade of Keemun black tea harvested during the Qing Ming festival, which usually falls around April 4-6th every year. Let's explore this exquisite tea in detail:

### **Region:**

Keemun Mao Feng is produced in the Qimen County of Anhui Province in China. The region is known for its misty mountains, rich soil, and temperate climate, which create ideal conditions for growing high-quality tea.

### **History:**

The history of Keemun tea is relatively recent compared to other Chinese teas, with its production beginning in the late 19th century. It was developed by a civil servant named Yu Ganchen who traveled to Fujian Province to learn the techniques of black tea production and introduced them to Qimen County. Since then, Keemun has become one of the most prestigious and popular black teas in China and abroad.

### **Tasting Notes:**

The "Qing Ming" in "Keemun Mao Feng Qing Ming" indicates that the tea was harvested during the Qing Ming festival, a period considered to be a premium harvest time when the young buds and leaves are at their freshest and most tender. Here are the tasting notes you can expect:

### **Appearance:**

The leaves of Keemun Mao Feng are typically slender, wiry, and slightly curled, with a notable presence of golden tips indicating the high quality of the tea. The dry leaves have a glossy appearance due to the fine hairs on the young buds.

### **Aroma:**

This tea is known for its unique "Keemun aroma," which is a complex fragrance that can include floral notes (like orchid or rose), a hint of smokiness, and sometimes a slightly fruity aspect. It is also often described as having a pine and plum blossom aroma.

## 2023 KEEMUN MAO FENG QING MING- CONT'D

### **Flavor:**

The flavor profile of Keemun Mao Feng Qing Ming is quite refined and complex. It often exhibits a rich maltiness complemented by a natural sweetness, and nuances of stone fruits like peach or plum. The taste can also have hints of cocoa and a slight floral undertone, creating a well-rounded and layered tasting experience.

### **Liquor:**

The liquor is a beautiful amber or reddish-brown hue, clear and bright, indicating the freshness and high quality of the tea.

### **Mouthfeel:**

This tea is known for its smooth, full-bodied, and slightly velvety mouthfeel, with a lingering, sweet aftertaste that can sometimes have a hint of floral notes.

### **Brewing Tips:**

To get the best flavor, it's generally recommended to brew Keemun Mao Feng Qing Ming with water at a temperature of about 90-95°C (194-203°F), allowing it to steep for 3-5 minutes. You can adjust the brewing time to taste, possibly extending it for a stronger brew or reducing it for a lighter one.

### **Pairing Suggestions:**

Given its complex flavor profile, Keemun Mao Feng Qing Ming pairs well with a variety of foods, including pastries, dark chocolate, or mildly flavored cheeses. It can also be enjoyed on its own to fully appreciate its nuanced flavors.

Overall, Keemun Mao Feng Qing Ming is a highly prized tea, sought after by tea enthusiasts for its complex flavor profile and the skill involved in its production. It offers a rich and rewarding tasting experience, particularly when enjoyed during a quiet, contemplative moment.

# SRI LANKAN BLACK TEA

Atop the picturesque mountains of Sri Lanka's sacred Uji Region perches Idulgashinna Bio Tea Garden at 5,300 ft high. Bordering a wildlife preserve this pioneer tea plantation is the pinnacle of sustainability and humanity harmonized into a divine and delicious variation of Black Teas that are grown surrounded by a wild life preserve & a bird sanctuary.

My connection with Idulgashinna goes beyond the tea; it's deeply personal. In the embrace of this enchanting tea estate, my husband and I exchanged vows, uniting our lives in a heartfelt wedding ceremony. Now, each cup of Idulgashinna black tea holds not just its unique flavors but the sweet memories of that day, forever binding me to this idyllic place. As I prepare to revisit this beloved garden at the end of the month, I'm reminded that, in the world of tea, stories, love, and flavors all find their perfect blend, leaving an indelible mark on the heart.

# **IDULGASHINNA BLACK TEA**

## **THE PIONEERING HOME OF BIODYNAMIC TEA**

The Idulgashinna Bio Tea Estate is a notable location within Sri Lanka's vibrant tea industry, primarily due to its commitment to organic farming and biodynamic agricultural practices. Here are some details about its history, unique qualities, and processes:

### **HISTORY**

**Initiation of Organic Practices:** The Idulgashinna tea estate transitioned to organic farming in the early 1980s, making it one of the pioneers of organic tea cultivation in Sri Lanka, and possibly the world.

**Fairtrade Certification:** Idulgashinna was the first tea garden in the world to receive Fairtrade certification in 1998. This certification signifies that the workers are paid fair wages and work in decent conditions.

**Biodynamic Farming:** Apart from its organic farming approach, the estate has also embraced biodynamic farming practices, a method that aligns farming activities with cosmic cycles to create a self-sustaining ecosystem.

### **UNIQUE QUALITIES**

**Organic Farming:** The estate is committed to organic farming, which means they do not use synthetic pesticides, herbicides, or fertilizers in their tea cultivation. This not only helps in preserving the soil quality but also ensures that the teas are free from chemical residues.

**Biodynamic Farming:** This method goes a step beyond organic farming, involving practices like using herbal preparations to enhance soil health, planting cover crops to protect the soil, and coordinating planting and harvesting activities with lunar cycles. It aims to create a closed-loop, sustainable farming system where the farm is viewed as a single, self-sustaining organism.

**High-Quality Tea:** The combination of organic and biodynamic farming methods, along with the high elevation of the estate, contributes to producing high-quality teas with a rich flavor profile and aromatic notes.



## Idulgashinna black tea- Cont'd

**Biodiversity Conservation:** The estate is involved in biodiversity conservation efforts, preserving the native flora and fauna in the region. This not only helps in maintaining ecological balance but also enriches the soil through natural processes.

### NOTABLE FACTS

**Location:** The estate is located in the Uva Province, which is renowned for producing some of the best teas in Sri Lanka. Its specific location within the highlands gives the tea a unique flavor profile that is highly sought after by tea connoisseurs worldwide.

**Community Engagement:** Idulgashinna Bio Tea Estate is known for its community engagement efforts. They provide fair wages and good working conditions to their workers, contributing to the overall well-being of the local community.

**Global Recognition:** The tea from Idulgashinna has received global recognition for its quality and the sustainable practices employed in its cultivation. It is exported to several countries and is appreciated for its rich flavor and aroma.

**Tourism:** Like many tea estates in Sri Lanka, Idulgashinna also attracts tourists who are interested in learning about organic and biodynamic farming practices. The scenic beauty of the region, combined with the experience of witnessing sustainable farming practices, makes it a unique destination for tea tourism.

### PROCESSES

**Tea Cultivation:** The tea cultivation process in the estate follows the biodynamic calendar, with activities like planting and harvesting coordinated with cosmic rhythms to enhance the vitality of the tea plants.

**Processing:** The processing of tea leaves in Idulgashinna follows the orthodox method, which involves withering, rolling, fermenting, and drying the leaves. This method preserves the natural flavor and aroma of the tea.

**Quality Control:** The estate follows stringent quality control measures to ensure that the tea produced meets the highest standards. This includes careful monitoring of the soil health, regular testing of the tea leaves for residues, and meticulous attention to the processing steps to preserve the quality of the tea.

## CEYLON OP1 BLACK TEA

In the heart of Sri Lanka's lush landscapes, Ceylon black tea reigns supreme. With its bright and lively character, this brew encapsulates the island's rich diversity. As we journey into the world of Ceylon black tea. Savor the essence of Sri Lanka, where every cup is a sip of its verdant beauty and vibrant culture.

### **Production Process:**

- Ceylon black tea, celebrated for its bright and brisk qualities, undergoes plucking, withering, rolling, oxidation, and final drying, a process that accentuates its unique characteristics.

### **How does the flavor differ from other styles of black tea?**

- Ceylon black tea stands out with its lively and bright flavor profile. Unlike some heavier black teas, Ceylon teas tend to be lighter and more refreshing, offering a citrusy and somewhat floral note that sets them apart.

### **Origin:**

- Ceylon black tea, also known as Sri Lankan black tea, hails from the picturesque island of Sri Lanka. The island's diverse microclimates and elevations contribute to the tea's rich variety.

### **Brewing Instructions:**


- Brew Ceylon black tea with water heated to about 200-212°F (93-100°C). Steep for 3-5 minutes for a delightful balance, though you can adjust steeping times to suit your taste.

### **Tasting Notes:**

- Relish the bright and brisk qualities of Ceylon black tea, with its distinct citrusy and somewhat floral notes. It offers a lively and refreshing cup that is perfect for any time of the day.

### **Scent Notes:**

- The aroma of Ceylon black tea is often citrusy and slightly floral, creating an invigorating and uplifting experience, like a breath of fresh air.



# NEPAL, INDIA & JAPAN BLACK TEAS!

25 BLACK TEA

## **JAPANESE FOP1**

### **KAGOSHIMA ORGANIC BLACK TEA**

Japanese black tea, often referred to as "Wakocha," possesses a certain rarity owing to its relatively limited production. Japan is renowned for its green tea cultivation, and the crafting of black tea is a specialized endeavor, practiced by fewer tea artisans. This rarity, combined with Japan's unique terroir and artisanal expertise, makes Japanese black tea a sought-after treasure for those who appreciate its distinct and subtle flavors, setting it apart from the more commonly produced teas in the world.

#### **Production Process:**

- Japanese black teas, known as "Wakocha," undergo plucking, withering, rolling, and full oxidation, distinguishing them from Japanese green teas.

#### **Flavor:**

- Unlike bolder black teas from other regions, Japanese black teas offer a smoother, milder taste with subtle floral and fruity undertones.

#### **Origin:**

- Grown in regions like Uji and Kagoshima, Japan's natural surroundings and skilled artisans contribute to the exceptional quality of its black teas.

#### **Brewing Instructions:**

- Steep Japanese black tea in 200°F (93°C) water for 3-4 minutes, adjusting to taste for varying intensities.

#### **Tasting Notes:**

- Japanese black teas feature a delicate sweetness with hints of honey or malt, accompanied by subtle floral notes for a well-balanced cup.

#### **Scent Notes:**

- The aroma blends fruity and floral notes with a touch of earthiness, creating an inviting and aromatic tea experience.

## **ORIGIN: NEPAL**

### **TINJURE COOPERATIVE NEPALESE BLACK TEA**

In the remote eastern corridors of Nepal, nestled against the Indian border and beneath the watchful peaks of Mount Everest, a distinct tea culture has been brewing for generations. Historically, the teas from this region were often overshadowed by the famed Darjeeling teas, owing to their similar soil compositions and the lack of a distinctive market presence for Nepali teas. However, the genesis of a self-sufficient tea industry in Nepal is being orchestrated by grassroots farmers, whose lineage has seamlessly traversed the terrains of Nepal and India, long before political boundaries delineated them as separate nations. This rich history of migration has facilitated the exchange of the revered *Camellia sinensis* plant varieties and tea-making expertise between the northeastern parts of India and eastern Nepal. Currently, the burgeoning sector is marrying traditional knowledge with innovation, forging a refreshed and sustainable trajectory for South Asian tea cultivation. For deeper insights, you can explore our blog post dedicated to this region.

**Tea Producers:** Back in the 1990s, a trinity of villages situated on adjoining hills united with a vision to cultivate tea. This alliance christened themselves "Tinjure", drawing inspiration from their topographical features – "Tin" signifying three, and "jure" denoting hills. Initially, the freshly founded Tinjure Cooperative traded their harvested green tea leaves to prominent tea estates in the vicinity, including the Kanchenjunga Tea Estate, a supplier we proudly represent. This changed in 2013 when the cooperative garnered sufficient funds to launch their own tea processing plant, enabling them to process the leaves they harvested independently. Presently, the cooperative thrives with a robust membership of 240 individuals.

**Significance:** Marking its place as the inaugural cooperative to own and manage a factory in Nepal, the Tinjure Cooperative has revolutionized the livelihoods of local tea farmers. By taking charge of the tea production process, the farmers at Tinjure have amplified their earnings by a whopping twentyfold compared to their income from selling unprocessed green leaves to private factories. Steering this transformative journey is Tinjure's diverse board of directors, inclusive of both female and male members, who are at the forefront of mobilizing and empowering surrounding communities. This initiative is facilitating the metamorphosis of Nepali tea cultivators into adept tea producers, consequently steering them towards a more lucrative segment of the tea industry.



## **ORIGIN: NEPAL**

### **TINJURE COOPERATIVE NEPALESE BLACK TEA CONT'D**

#### **Production Process:**

- Nepalese black teas, crafted with care, undergo plucking, withering, rolling, oxidation, and drying, reflecting the high-altitude gardens and artisanal expertise.

#### **Flavor:**

- Distinguished by a smoother, moderately astringent profile, this tea offers a totally unique range of flavors with notes of milk chocolate to raw honey.

#### **Brewing Instructions:**

- Brew with water heated to 200-212°F (93-100°C) for 3 minutes, though times may vary depending on the tea type and preference.

#### **Tasting Notes:**

- Enjoy a harmonious blend of sweet floral, hints of stone fruit, and occasional spiciness or woody undertones in Nepalese black teas, known for their well-rounded taste.

#### **Scent Notes:**

- Experience the captivating aroma of Nepalese black teas, often marked by floral and fruity notes with a touch of earthiness, a fragrant tribute to the Himalayan tea gardens see if you can pick up on scents of honey, chocolate and even a touch of tobacco.

## **ORIGIN: DOOARS, ASSAM, INDIA**

### **PUTHARJHORA ASSAM FOP BLACK TEA**

Putharjhora distinguishes itself as a beacon of sustainable agriculture in the Dooars region, boasting not only organic certifications but also embracing the holistic approach of bio-dynamic farming. Situated amidst lush landscapes, it holds the remarkable distinction of being the sole tea garden in Dooars to have secured both organic and Fair Trade certifications, underlining its commitment to ethical and sustainable practices.

This notable estate meticulously aligns its farming practices with the rhythmic cycles of the moon, a principle element of bio-dynamic agriculture. This intricate process, grounded in the philosophy of fostering a deep connection with the cosmic rhythms, influences the planting, cultivating, and harvesting stages, thereby promoting the growth of tea with enriched flavors and attributes. This approach, which marries age-old wisdom with innovative agricultural practices, is believed to enhance the vitality and quality of the crop, bringing a unique depth of flavor and aroma to the teas cultivated here.

Furthermore, the garden employs a diverse range of natural inputs to nurture its soil and protect its precious crops. Utilizing a rich arsenal of herbs and other organic materials, it has devised a remarkable strategy to bolster soil nutrition and ward off pests, eschewing synthetic chemicals entirely. This not only ensures the production of teas that are free from chemical residues but also fosters a vibrant, biodiverse ecosystem within the garden.

By employing this plethora of impressive organic and bio-dynamic practices, Putharjhora stands as a living testament to the potential of sustainable agriculture, offering teas that are as nourishing to the body as they are to the soul. It serves as a model, showcasing how a synergy between modern sustainable techniques and time-honored practices can lead to a product that is both exceptional in quality and ethically produced.

#### **Brewing Instructions:**

Brew Assam black tea with boiling water, steeping for 3-5 minutes to suit your preferred strength.

#### **Tasting Notes:**

Enjoy the strong, brisk, malty flavors of Assam black tea, often complemented by caramel and toffee notes, creating a rich and bold cup great for breakfast teas and takes milk well.

#### **Scent Notes:**

The aroma is robust and earthy, with hints of malt and sweetness, offering a comforting and inviting tea experience.



# BLENDING TIPS

Blending a breakfast tea with black tea leaves involves combining different varieties of black tea to create a harmonious blend with a rich and robust flavor profile, typically enjoyed in the morning. Here's how you can create your custom breakfast tea blend:

## Step 1: Selection of Black Tea Leaves

Firstly, you will need to choose the types of black tea leaves that you want to blend. Common types of black tea used in breakfast blends are:

**Assam:** A strong, malty, and robust tea from India which forms a great base for any breakfast blend.

**Ceylon:** This Sri Lankan tea is bright and lively with citrus notes.

**Kenyan:** Offers a bold, astringent, and full-bodied profile.

**Keemun:** A Chinese black tea that has a slightly smoky flavor and can add depth to your blend.

**Darjeeling:** Known for its light, floral, and fruity notes, it can add complexity to the blend.

## Step 2: Experiment with Proportions

The proportions of each tea type in the blend will significantly influence the final flavor profile. Start by experimenting with different ratios to find the perfect balance. A basic blend might look something like this:

50% Assam (for a strong, malty base)

30% Ceylon (for a bright, citrusy note)

20% Keemun (to add body and boldness)

**Mix the Teas:** In a large bowl, mix your selected teas in the desired proportions.

**Adding Extras:** If using, add your chosen spices, herbs, or other additions and mix well to distribute them evenly.

**Taste Test:** Brew a small cup of the blend to taste test. Adjust the proportions or additions as necessary based on your taste preferences.

**Let it Rest:** Once blended, let the mixture rest for a few hours to allow the flavors to meld.