

Spinney Kitchen

Tea Fact Sheet

- This fact sheet is all about the different types of 'True' Tea.
- All the various types of tea are available from our website at;

www.spinneykitchen.co.uk/acatalog/Teas.html



Tea is a beverage made by steeping the leaves, buds, or twigs of the tea bush, *Camellia sinensis*, in hot water for a few minutes.

The four basic types of true tea are: black tea, oolong tea, green tea, and white tea.

The term "herbal tea" usually refers to infusions of fruit or of herbs (such as rosehip or chamomile) that contain no *Camellia sinensis* (The more correct term for herbal tea is *tisane*.)

Camellia sinensis is an evergreen plant and grows

in tropical to sub-tropical climates. Only the top 1-2 inches of the mature plant are picked. These buds and leaves are called *flushes*, and a plant will grow a new flush every seven to ten days during the growing season.

Two principal varieties are used, the small-leaved China plant (*C. sinensis sinensis*) and the large-leaved Assam plant (*C. sinensis assamica*).

Tea is traditionally classified by production technique

Black tea

The tea leaves are allowed to completely oxidize a process which normally takes between two weeks and one month.

Black tea is classified as either *orthodox* or as *CTC* (*Crush, Tear, Curl*). Orthodox processed black teas are further graded according to the post-production leaf quality by the Orange Pekoe system.

Unblended black teas are also identified by the estate they come from, their year and the flush (first, second or autumn).

Black tea is the most common form of tea in throughout most of the world.

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Oolong

With Oolong tea the oxidation takes place over two to three days and it is then stopped. In Chinese, semi-oxidized teas are collectively grouped as *blue tea*, while the term "oolong" is reserved as a name for certain semi-oxidized teas.

Green tea

With Green Teas the oxidation process is halted, by applying heat, after a minimal amount of oxidation has occurred. The leaves may be left to dry as separate leaves or they may be rolled into small pellets to make Gunpowder tea. This process is time consuming and is typically done with pekoes of higher quality. The tea is processed within one to two days of harvesting.

White tea

White tea is made from new growth buds, which may have been protected from sunlight, and that have undergone no oxidation. White tea is only produced in small quantities and can be more expensive than tea from the same plant processed by other methods.

Tea is normally classified using the Orange Pekoe system. The most commonly used codes are;

OP: Orange Pekoe

This refers to relatively longer and complete tea leaf.

BOP: Broken Orange Pekoe

This refers to broken orange pekoe. They make a stronger brew than OP, so they are more suitable to make milk tea.

FOP: Flowery Orange Pekoe

This refers to tea leaves that have buds, which would create a floral fragrance in the tea.

FBOP: Flower Broken Orange Pekoe

This contains both buds and broken tea leaves it makes a stronger tea with floral fragrance.

TGFOP: Tippy Golden Flowery Orange Pekoe

This contains young buds, which appear golden it makes a much more fragrant and strong tea than FOP.

FTGFOP: Fine(est) Tippy Golden Flowery Orange Pekoe

This is a very high quality tea that went through an extra procedure of rolling, which would draw out the best flavour in tea. Sometimes, jokingly, referred to as Far To Good For Ordinary People.

SFTGFOP: The 'S' stands for Super or Special. The meaning is obvious.

CTC: Crush, Tear, Curl

These teas are compressed into small pieces by a special machine. CTC leaves make a very strong brew in short amount of time. It is ideal for consuming with milk.

Fanning, Dust

This refers to very small pieces of tealeaves usually used in India to make Chai or milk tea.