

China

Tea



茶

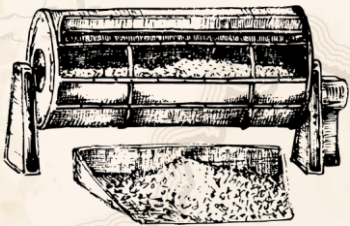
# The Production of Tea



**Picking the tea:** The leaves are usually picked twice a year during early spring and early summer. Traditionally tea was picked by hand and put into bamboo baskets. The bamboo baskets allow circulation of air and prevent the fresh tea leaves getting too hot.



**Wilting:** The tea leaves will begin to wilt soon after picking. The leaves can be either put under the sun or left in a cool room to remove moisture from them.



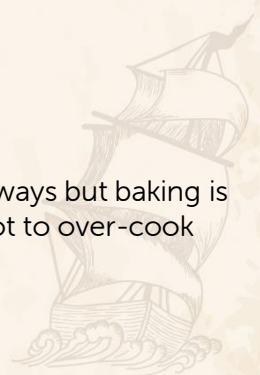
**Bruising:** The leaves are lightly bruised or torn by shaking and tossing. The bruising breaks down the structures inside and outside of the leaf cells and allows oxidation. Oxidation is a chemical process where the leaves change because of the addition of oxygen.



**Rolling:** The tea leaves are then rolled to form wrinkled strips. The rolling also causes some of the sap, essential oils, and juices inside the leaves to ooze out.



**Drying:** The drying can be done in many ways but baking is the most common. Great care is taken not to over-cook the leaves.



茶 chá

A fun way to remember the character for tea is to break it up into its three different parts:

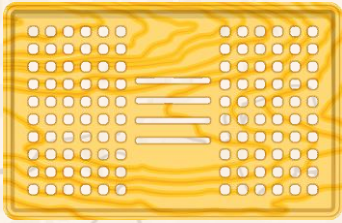
艹 grass or plant

亼 to gather or collect

小 small

Gather the tea plant for a small cup of tea.

# The Tea Ceremony



chá tuō pán  
茶托盘 - a tea tray to drain the used water or tea.



chá qì  
茶器 - utensils  
茶则 chá zé tea measure  
茶夹 chá jiā tea tweezers  
茶匙 chá chí teaspoon



chá hú  
茶壶 - tea pot



gài wǎn  
盖碗 - a bowl with lid, used to infuse the tea.



chá bēi  
茶杯 - tea cups

## The Tea Ceremony

1. The water should be 90°C and not boiling.
2. Show the tea leaves to the guests and allow them to look at the colour and smell the tea.
3. Heat the tea bowl and the cups by filling with the hot water and then pouring out. Lift the tea cups with the tea tweezers.
4. Put the tea into the gài wǎn (tea bowl). Wash the tea by pouring the hot water into the tea bowl with the tea leaves. This first infusion is not drunk, drain the water, keeping the tea leaves.
5. Pour the hot water into the tea bowl. Count for about 10 seconds. Strain the tea into a jug.
6. Serve the tea into the tea cups. Each cup should be about two-thirds full. Each cup is poured one at a time, bringing the tea jug back to be dried on a tea cloth after each pouring.

# Drinking the Tea

- After the tea has been poured, thank the host by lightly tapping the table with the index and middle finger, three times.
- Hold the tea cup with the thumb and index finger around the rim and middle finger under the cup.
- Drink the tea in three sips. The first is a little sip, the second is the main sip and the last is to finally feel the taste.



## Tapping the Fingers

Emperor Qián Lóng used to travel among the people in disguise to see how everyday people were living. One time he went to a restaurant with one of his servants and poured his servant a cup of tea. This is very unusual for an Emperor.

The servant had to show he was grateful, but he didn't want to kneel to bow because people would know he was with the Emperor. Instead the servant tapped the table with bent fingers to show his thanks.

The bent fingers represent a bowing servant.



Emperor Qián Lóng 乾隆  
Ruled 1735 - 1796

## History

Lù Yǔ 陆羽 (733–804) was a Chinese tea master and writer. He is best known for the book 'The Classic of Tea' 茶经 chá jīng, the first book written about making and drinking tea.





1. Weigh the tea leaves. This will depend on the quality of the tea and the number of people you are serving. For good quality tea, 6g will provide enough for four and be able to be infused about 20 times. Lesser quality tea may only be infused about 6 times.
2. It is important to display the items for the guests. Pass the measured tea around all the guests for them to look and smell.



3. Heat all the pots and cups with hot water first.
4. Place the tea into the gàiwǎn.



5. Pour the 90° water (not boiling water) into the gàiwǎn.
6. Infuse for only 10 seconds.



7. Pour from the *gàiwǎn* into the jug. Throw away this first infusion. Note the way the lid of the *gàiwǎn* is held.
8. Repeat. The second and further infusions are ready to drink.





9. Pour the tea into the cups.
10. The jug should be held as shown. The jug should be returned to wipe on a tea cloth before serving the next cup.

# Panda poo tea!

China

Don't worry it's not tea made of panda poo! It is tea grown with panda poo as the fertiliser.

Panda tea was invented in 2012 by a lecturer at Sichuan University called 安琰石 (Ān Yǎnshí). It is grown in Ya'an, Sichuan.

When the tea was first launched it was very expensive. There were many news reports all over the world about the most expensive tea, which was selling at £130 per cup! The profits from this first batch of tea were put into an environmental fund.

The tea is now sold at a reasonable price.



panda poo fertiliser tea

xióng māo shǐ féi liào chá

熊貓屎肥料茶

# Varieties of Tea

China

*Camellia sinensis* is the shrub or small tree whose leaves are used to produce tea.

All varieties of tea are made from this same plant but the different types are created depending on the drying and fermenting process.

There are five basic varieties and within these are further Chinese varieties.

Green tea 綠茶

Red tea 紅茶 (also known as black tea)

White tea 白茶

Oolong tea 烏龍茶 (black dragon tea)

Flowering tea 花茶 (includes Jasmine tea)



green

red

white

black dragon

flower

lǜ

hóng

bái

wū lóng

huā

綠

紅

白

烏龍

花

# Beyond the Panda

The Royal Zoological Society of Scotland's Beyond the Panda educational programme is designed for cross curricular learning where pupils investigate and discover more about China, its culture, language, geography, giant pandas and other Chinese wildlife.

Free resources are available on [beyondthepanda.org.uk](http://beyondthepanda.org.uk)

Free outreach for schools is also available throughout Scotland.



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