

## WHERE THERE IS TEA, THERE IS HOPE

**M. Bodyak**

*National University of Food Technologies*

Tea is an aromatic beverage commonly prepared by pouring hot or boiling water over cured leaves of the tea plant. After water, tea is the most widely consumed beverage in the world. It has a cooling, slightly bitter, astringent flavour that many people enjoy.

Tea has been promoted for having a variety of positive health benefits, though generally these benefits have not been adequately demonstrated in humans.

The phrase "herbal tea" usually refers to infusions of fruit or herbs made without the tea plant, such as rosehip tea, chamomile tea or rooibos tea.

### Tea processing

Teas can generally be divided into categories based on how they are processed. There are at least six different types of tea: white, yellow, green, oolong(or wulong), black (called red tea in China), and post-fermented tea (or black tea for the Chinese) of which the most commonly found on the market are white, green, oolong, and black.

### Tea blending and additives

Although single estate teas are available, almost all teas in bags and most other teas sold in the West are now blends. Blending may occur in the tea-planting area (as in the case of Assam), or teas from many areas may be blended. The aim of blending is to obtain better taste, higher price, or both, as a more expensive, better-tasting tea may cover the inferior taste of cheaper varieties.

Tea contains catechins, a type of antioxidant. In a freshly picked tea leaf, catechins can comprise up to 30% of the dry weight. Catechins are highest in concentration in white and green teas, while black tea has substantially fewer due to its oxidative preparation. Tea also contains L-theanine, and the stimulant caffeine at about 3% of its dry weight. Tea also contains small amounts of theobromine and theophylline. Due to modern environmental pollution ,fluoride and aluminium have also been found to occur in tea.

### History of tea

Every time you drink a cup of tea, you are taking part in a piece of history and in this section of Facts About Tea, we look at the very beginning of tea.It is said that tea was accidentally discovered in China, in 2737 BC, by Emperor Shen Hug, when a few tea leaves fell into his pot of boiling water.However, the habit of drinking tea leaves stepped in a tea pot became popular only during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644).Find out more about this and other stories as we look at the Origin of Tea in China, Japan and India.

## Health Benefits of Tea

Drinking tea is extremely healthy.

That's one of the best facts about tea for you to remember.

As you may know, it is rich in antioxidants, namely catechins and flavonoids, which reduces the risk of disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer, tooth decay, slows down the ageing process, etc.!

The benefits of tea may seem endless, especially if you add herbal teas into the mix.

### Black Tea

For example in India, black tea is often boiled for fifteen minutes or longer as a strong brew is preferred for making Masala chai. When the tea has brewed long enough to suit the tastes of the drinker, it should be strained while serving. The popular varieties of black (red) tea include Assam tea, Nepal tea, Darjeeling tea, Nilgiri tea, Turkish tea and Ceylon tea.

### Green Tea

In Morocco, green tea is steeped in boiling water for 15 minutes. In the West and Far East, a milder tea is appreciated. The container in which the tea is steeped, the mug or teapot, is often warmed beforehand so the tea does not immediately cool down. High-quality green and white teas can have new water added as many as five or more times, depending on variety, at increasingly higher temperatures.

### Oolong Tea

For best results, use spring water, as the minerals in spring water tend to bring out more flavor in the tea. High quality oolong can be brewed multiple times from the same leaves, and unlike green tea, it improves with reuse. It is common to brew the same leaves three to five times, the third steeping usually being the best.

### Pu-erh Tea

Pu-erh teas require boiling water for infusion. Some prefer to quickly rinse pu-erh for several seconds with boiling water to remove tea dust which accumulates from the aging process, then infuse it at the boiling point, and allow it to steep from 30 seconds to five minutes.

### Production

The largest producers of tea are the People's Republic of China, India, Kenya, Sri Lanka, and Turkey.

## References:

1. <http://EzineArticles.com/1049665>
2. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tea>
3. <http://www.healthy-green-tea.com/interesting-facts-about-tea>.

**Scientific supervisor: K. Chala.**

