

The Creation of Tea

Book detailing the production of tea

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Classifications, Colors, Types, and additional terminology

Anything in tea that does not have a commonly known word will be added somewhere in this chapter.

White

White tea (白茶, Bái Chá, "White Tea") is defined not by its cooking process but rather by its lack of oxidation. White tea is the only category of tea that is, by definition, raw. This means that it cannot be described in terms of oxidation, because it starts off unoxidized (like green tea) and slowly oxidizes over time.

Sources:

- <https://westchinatea.com/tea/white-tea/>

Green

Green Tea (绿茶, Lǜ Chá, "Green Tea") is fully unoxidized tea, produced by dry roasting or steaming the freshly picked tea leaves. This cooking process, called Shā Qīng 杀青 ("Kill the Green"), is meant to denature an enzyme called Polyphenol Oxidase, which catalyses oxidation in tea. By halting this process of oxidation, green tea masters are able to preserve the sweet flavor and grassy fragrance of freshly picked tea.

Sources:

- <https://westchinatea.com/tea/green-tea/>

Classifications, Colors, Types, and additional terminology

Yellow

Yellow Tea (黄茶, Huáng Chá, "Yellow Tea") is more oxidized than Green Tea, less oxidized than Oolong tea, and processed in a variety of ways, often involving prolonged withering. The result is Yellow in leaf and liquor, with a drier mouthfeel and warmer Qi than Green Tea.

Sources:

- <https://westchinatea.com/tea/yellow-tea/>

Oolong (also "Blue")

Oolong Tea (烏龍, Wū Lóng Chá, "Dark Dragon Tea") is partially oxidized tea, landing roughly between 20%-80% oxidation. This makes oolong tea one of the largest categories of tea, encompassing a broad range of flavors, fragrances, and processing styles. We've chosen to subcategorize our oolong catalogue by growing region. There are four main regions known for producing oolong tea: the Wuyi Mountains in Fujian; Anxi County also in Fujian; the Phoenix Mountains in Guangdong; and the island nation of Taiwan.

QUEST: Look for and add a better reference to "blue tea" being an alternative name for "oolong". Wikipedia reference that needs verifying: The Chinese term *wulong* (oolong) was first used to describe a tea in the 1857 text *Miscellaneous Notes on Fujian* by Shi Hongbao. In Taiwan, oolong teas are also known as *qingcha* (Chinese: [Pinyin](#): *qīngchá*; [Péh-ōe-jī](#): *chheⁿ-tê*) or "dark green teas" since early 2000. The term "blue tea" (French: *thé bleu*) in French is synonymous with the term oolong.[\[4\]](#)

[Phoenix Mountain Oolongs](#) (鳳凰單叢, Fèng Huáng Dān Cōng, "Phoenix Single Bush") are known for their highly specific and distinctive profiles. Tea farmers and masters from this region are known for cultivating tea plants by cloning an idiosyncratic mother tree, resulting in a batch of leaves that are all genetically identical. This produces the single-genome varieties known as *dān cōng* 單叢 ("single bush").

[Wuyi Mountain Oolongs](#) (巖茶, Yán Chá, "Rock Tea") are known for the distinct mineral flavor of their leaves. The Wuyi Mountains are craggy, with a generally thin topsoil layer, resulting in dwarfed trees that grow slowly, concentrating minerals in their leaves. Often collectively known as Yán Chá 巖茶 ("Rock Tea"), these oolongs exhibit complex roasted flavors with nutty or caramel aromas. The Wuyi Mountains are also the origin point of the oolong technique.

[Anxi County Oolongs](#) (安溪烏龍茶, Ānxī Wūlóng Chá, "Anxi Oolong Tea") can range from floral, lightly-oxidized oolongs to dark, high-oxidation, charcoal-roasted varieties. This region is most famous for producing Tiě Guān Yīn, but is also home to some dynamic heirloom varieties, collectively known as the *sè zhǒng* 色種 ("color types"). Anxi Oolongs are characteristically rolled into little pebbles that unfurl and expand when you steep them.

Sources:

- <https://westchinatea.com/tea/oolong/>

Black/Red

Red Tea (红茶, Hóng Chá, "Red Tea") is fully oxidized tea. In the West, this type of tea is typically known as "Black Tea," including popular blends like Earl Grey or English Breakfast. Red Tea is arguably a more accurate nomenclature, since the liquor produced by this tea is a beautiful, auburn red. Furthermore, in China, the name Red Tea helps to distinguish this type of tea from another very different type of tea, which the Chinese call [Heicha](#) (黑茶), literally "Black Tea."

Sources:

- <https://westchinatea.com/tea/red/>

Classifications, Colors, Types, and additional terminology

Hei Cha (Dark)

Hei Cha is tea that is fermented. The leaves may be intentionally fermented through a piling and turning process or the leaves may ferment naturally over time. Aged Hei Chas are prized for their depth of flavor and medicinal qualities, and they are often pressed into cakes.

Sources:

- <https://westchinatea.com/tea/hei-cha/>

Classifications, Colors, Types, and additional terminology

Shu Pu-erh

Shu Pu'er, or Ripened Pu'er, refers to Yunnan tea that has been intentionally fermented to emulate the round, smooth flavor and earthy fragrance of Sheng Pu'er that has been naturally aged for 20+ years.

Sources:

- <https://westchinatea.com/tea/puer/shu/>

Classifications, Colors, Types, and additional terminology

Sheng Pu-erh

[Sheng Pu'er](#) (生普, Shēng Pǔ'ěr, "Sheng Pu'er"), briefly, is a minimally-processed tea made from a lineage of closely-related ancient tea trees in Yunnan, collectively known as dà yè zhòng 大叶种 ("Big Leaf Type"). Sheng Pu'er is processed very much like Green Tea. It is notable for being traditionally aged and pressed into cakes.

Sources:

- <https://westchinatea.com/tea/puer/sheng/>

Yuán Shēng Tuó

The name Yuán Shēng Tuó is coined by Li Shulin referring to a technique for the artisan fermentation of very small batches of Pu'er. In contrast to the industrial Wò Duī 沱 (“Moistening and Piling”) process and the smaller scale Xiǎo Duī Zi 小堆子 (“Small Pile”) process, tea leaves are not turned during the maturation of Yuán Shēng Tuó. This allows the micro-organisms that ferment the tea to form networks of hyphae, causing the leaves to consolidate into a solid chunk, the word Tuó 沱 (“chunk”) refers to this solid amorphous shape. Li Shulin’s motivation for this style of fermentation was to recreate the complex flavor of the old, naturally fermented Sheng Pu'er that he drank as a child. This process is slower, smaller, and requires more skill and attention than the Wò Duī or Xiǎo Duī Zi processes. It can only be done with a maximum of ten kilograms of tea at a time. As a result, each individual batch of Yuán Shēng Tuó is unique, though all possess the rich, earthy organic flavor of Shu Pu'er while retaining the complex fragrance of Sheng Pu'er.

Sources:

- <https://westchinatea.com/50g-anansi-yuan-sheng-tuo/>

Classifications, Colors, Types, and additional terminology

Purple

Classifications, Colors, Types, and additional terminology

Ancient tree

Classifications, Colors, Types, and additional terminology

Herbal / Tisane (Including herbal mixtures)

Herbal tea refers to any plant, besides tea (*Camellia sinensis*), that is steeped like tea.

- Flowers
- Berries
- Nuts
- *Camellia crassifolia*

Classifications, Colors, Types, and additional terminology

Herbal Infusion

Classifications, Colors, Types, and additional terminology

Additional Terminology

Tea Production

Tea Production

Oxidation

Tea Production

Roasting

Tea Production

Withering

Brewing Techniques

Gongfu Cha (Tea) Basics



Please keep in mind that Gongfu is a very wide-spread practice and will be adapted to the tastes of the person making the tea. Alternatively said, there are many techniques and many methods for preparing tea. Some people may believe there is an even more basic/traditional/easier/etc way to do gongfu, and the Tea Tavern has no way to prove them nor us wrong or right. As a result, the following is writing based on what the Tea Tavern currently believes. If you have an interest in going down that research rabbit hole, email quests@tea-tavern.com, where our quest givers may be able to provide extra resources in hopes of you sharing the information that you learn with us, after finding it. (^-^)

Basic Tea Tavern Gongfu Cha

Tooling

Gongfu Cha uses the following materials, which can be seen in the image above. The items in the image come in the [Adventurer's Brewing Kit](#) on tea-tavern.com.

General tea preparation tools, such as a kettle for hot water, are still used, but these items are different than what is often seen in other culture's brewing methods.

Gaiwan

One of the most traditional and useful methods of brewing tea is in a gaiwan (porcelain cup and lid, to the left of the glass cup). It has a rimmed bottom, an outward curved lip, and a lid with it's own rimmed handle. This is the container that tea leaves are brewed.

Gong Dao Bei (Justice cup) / Furnace / Serving cup

When one finishes brewing, the tea from the gaiwan is poured into the justice cup (Glass cup with a lip for pouring on the right). This assures "justice" in that everyone will be given the same strength brew of tea, rather than the first person served receiving the weakest brew, and the last person receiving the strongest brew.

Tea cup / Tasting cup

The tea cup (front three cups) is the cup that receives some of the brewed tea from the justice cup and is used for drinking the tea. The size is usually smaller than the gaiwan and justice cup, as they will each be given equal amounts of tea from the Justice cup. As a result, everyone drinking tea prepared by gongfu will need a cup.

Prepare for Tea!

Materials can be prepared before beginning anything more time sensitive.

- Gongfu-specific Supplies
 - Gaiwan
 - Justice Cup
 - Tea cups
- Water
 - Most kettles fill to around 1-2 liters or 4-8 cups, depending on what unit of measurement the kettle uses.
 - Use purified (distilled, reverse osmosis, etc.) water, and add either...

- 1 or 2 milliliters of A&B [Original](#) minerals to remineralize the water, making the perfect water for tea
- Or a minor pinch of salt
- There are a lot of reasons for this, and if you'd like more information on this topic, our brewing component supplier TeaCurious has a lot of information on this topic.
- Tea
 - Measure out 5g (5 grams) of tea, and add it to your gaiwan

Why Measure the Quantity of Tea?



n, and [Oolong](#) teas. How



These are dry leaves, that were processed very differently (See other chapters for an explanation of the different possible forms of processing). The cups are the same, yet the leaves each take up a different volume. So visually, we can't accurately know how much mass we are putting in, unless we already know the particular tea.

Now, what if you were to hold it by hand? 5g is pretty light, so do you think you could distinguish mass between 3g, 5g, and 8g?

QUEST: Get research on how object size alters the perception of mass and a study on how much mass people can distinguish between.



measured on a scale (The
the cup)



The scale as a variance of approximately ± 0.2 grams.

They were all the same amount of tea, but due to their vastly different sizes. As a result of this difference, the Tea Tavern would rather measure how much tea is used when brewing.

Prepare the Tea

PLEASE READ THIS ALL OF THIS SECTION BEFORE STARTING. We are using boiling water, here!

We are also skipping many technique specifics, using a technique that may not be ~perfect~ for every tea, but works for most; The focus is a good, general explanation, showing the safest options for someone new. At a later time, more techniques will be written about on different pages.

That being said, the basic steps will be as follows:

1. Add water to the gaiwan and put the lid on top once done. When filling, try to fill it to where the gaiwan starts to curve out, where the lid would still seal on top of the water, or below either the above points.
2. Wait a few seconds, 2-10 seconds for most tea
3. Understand that nobody cast the "modify memory" spell. 2-10 SECONDS for steeping, so I hope you read this all ahead of time, because you probably should be pouring by now. (To be honest for most teas, it isn't the end of the world if you go over; it just becomes strong to most people. You might like stronger teas, though. Learn and brew to your preference.)
4. Lift the gaiwan with both hands.
 1. Put your thumbs **on**, not *in*, the lid's rim.
 2. Use your fingers to lift from the bottom of the gaiwan, and like the top, put your fingers **on**, not *inside*, the gaiwan's bottom rim.
 3. Reason: The gaiwan gets hot. These rims help prevent the user from getting burned. This is also why NOT hold the inside of the rims. They are also closer to the water, and will get hot fast by comparison to the rims.
5. Over the justice cup, tilt the gaiwan's top towards yourself and the bottom away from yourself. The brewed tea will start to come out, and should stream into the justice cup. If nothing comes out, return the gaiwan to a normal standing position and adjust the lid slightly to make sure there is not a water-tight seal between the lid and cup. Then try again.

After all this, the brewed tea should be in the cup, ready for serving.

Serve the Tea

Pour equal amounts of tea from the justice cup into the tea cups for as many people as are having tea.

When ready for more tea, repeat the "Prepare the Tea" practice, as some Tea Tavern leaves can be re-steeped over 10 times and still have a good amount of flavor. It is worth noting that the more steeps completed, the longer the steeping might have to go for to get a satisfactory flavor. And over all those brewing, people can talk, share stories, laugh, and live merry over a fresh brew (of tea). ;D

But maybe you aren't using Tea Tavern leaves. Well, we accept that others also have nice teas, and one easy way of telling if a vendor sells high quality tea is by tasting the later steepings from gongfu cha. If the tea tastes good all the way through every steep, it is probably a pretty good quality tea. If it becomes a straight bitter, or an otherwise *weird* flavor that people find unpleasant, it is likely *not* a good quality tea.

Why Measure the Quantity of Tea to Use



7, and [Oolong](#) teas. How



These are dry leaves, that were processed very differently (See other chapters for an explanation of the different possible forms of processing). The cups are the same, yet the leaves each take up a different volume. So visually, we can't accurately know how much mass we are putting in, unless we already know the particular tea.

Now, what if you were to hold it by hand? 5g is pretty light, so do you think you could distinguish mass between 3g, 5g, and 8g?

QUEST: Get research on how object size alters the perception of mass and a study on how much mass people can distinguish between.

The following are the exact same as their corresponding tea above, but measured on a scale (The white tea didn't fit on the tea plate, so was taken out of and put back into the cup)



The scale as a variance of approximately ± 0.2 grams.

They were all the same amount of tea, but due to their vastly different sizes. As a result of this difference, the Tea Tavern would rather measure how much tea is used when brewing.

Water Recipes

How To Make Tea Curious Water

Materials & Tools You'll Need

- **Base water** — either purified, reverse osmosis, or distilled water, which are all waters that have had the minerals removed from them through various methods. They serve as a blank slate for us to build our mineral profile on top of. These waters can often be found at the grocery store, at refill stations, or at specialty water stores.
 - Can also be made at home if you have a RO filter that **does not automatically re-mineralize the water**.
 - Can also be made at home with a Zero Water pitcher, but note that your mileage may vary: if your tap water is already very hard you will blow through the Zero Water pitcher very quickly, but some people have had success using this.
- **Minerals** — linked below are the same food-grade minerals we use for our own water and products, and while they may sound a little intimidating at first if this is your first time handling these mineral salts, these are all commonly used in food applications and are the same minerals found in all natural mineral waters.
 - [Calcium chloride](#), chemical composition CaCl_2 .
 - [Sodium bicarbonate](#), chemical composition NaHCO_3
 - [Magnesium sulfate](#), chemical composition $\text{MgSO}_4 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$
 - [Potassium bicarbonate](#), chemical composition KHCO_3
- **Tools:**
 - [Weighing Scale accurate to 0.001g](#), recommended to weigh out precise amounts of minerals
 - [TDS Meter](#) — this is the one we use and now offer since it works *and* is super stylish. But any other one should work fine.
 - Container for the water (standard 5 gallon/18.9 liter container), for water refills & to store water in

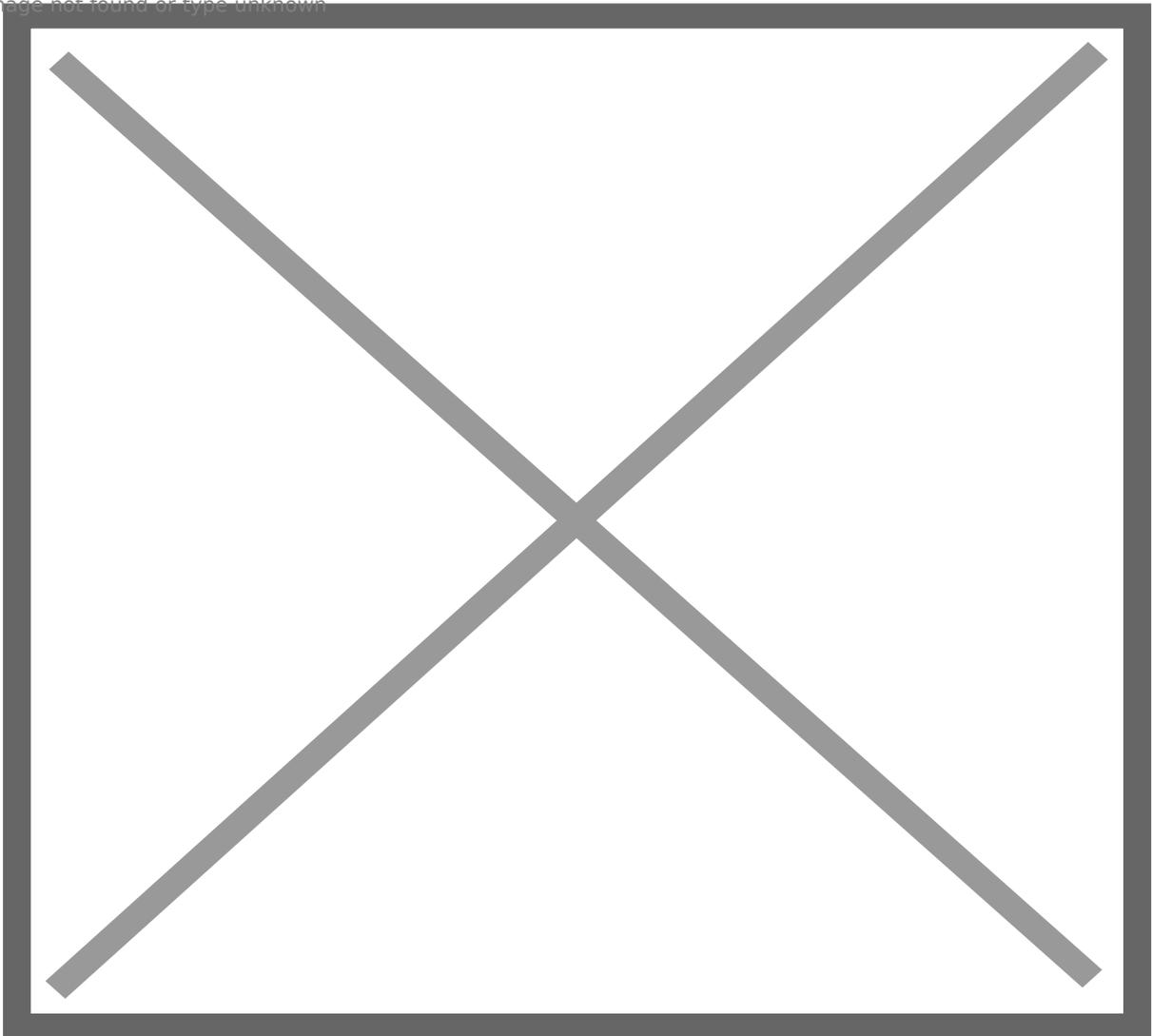
Your total starting investment into these tools will run around 60 USD, but this will then allow you to make your own mineral water at around \$0.10/liter or less, a pretty vast improvement from buying bottled mineral water from the store. You can also opt to [pick up pre-made options from the Tea Curious Water store](#) if you prefer — an option we made available after we realized not

everyone wanted to formulate entirely from scratch. Pick what suits you best!

Making Your First Batch

To make Tea Curious water, start by measuring out the appropriate amounts of each mineral for the amount of water you need, based on the following chart:

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For example, **for 5 gallons (18.9 liters) of water**, weigh out:

- 0.226 grams of potassium bicarbonate
- 0.34 grams of calcium chloride
- 0.472 grams of magnesium sulfate
- 0.34 grams of sodium bicarbonate
 - *If using sodium carbonate (v.1.0): 0.226 grams*
- Mix with the water! Allow 5-10 minutes to completely dissolve, if needed.

You can stop here and have a perfectly great water for tea -- seriously!

However, there's one more component that, while a little more tricky to get, is just the cherry on top on this already-awesome water, and that's **amorphous silica**. I especially recommend it if you're a bit of a texture & aftertaste junkie like we are with our teas.

Refer to the table above for silica/silicon dioxide measurements. For example, for a 5 gallon / 18.9 liter container:

- 0.189 grams of amorphous, food grade silicon dioxide
- (Optional) **Non-crystalline**, amorphous silica (**do not use crystalline silica!**)
- Mix with the water, together with the other ingredients! Allow 5-10 minutes to completely dissolve, if needed.

Originating and additional information from our partners at Tea Curious:

<https://www.teacurious.com/water-recipe>

Archived version:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20240924233032/https://www.teacurious.com/water-recipe/>

On how to use water for tea: <https://www.teacurious.com/how-to-use-water-to-influence-tea-flavor>

Archived version: <https://web.archive.org/web/20241216030525/https://www.teacurious.com/how-to-use-water-to-influence-tea-flavor>