

# The CHA chronicles

For the average Bengali, tea is mostly about Black Tea. It is Dud Cha, Rong Cha or Masala Cha. Because it is a part of our daily routine, we do not really think about what we can do differently. Indulging in different variations of the classic Black Tea can be a rather pleasant surprise.



Does it strike you as unusual when you come across someone who doesn't drink tea, or am I the only one? I mean, it's tea! This is what most of us start our mornings with. It awakens us; prepares us for the day we are about to have. To most of us it is an integral part of our day, but to Mishael Aziz Ahmad it is so much more than that.

Aziz is a tea connoisseur who adds different kinds of tea to his collection every time he visits a new place. He embarked upon this magical journey of collecting and tasting tea five years ago and his love for tea has only been growing since then.

Tea is nothing less than a herbal remedy. Starting from taking care of stress to bloating, tea can be your friend in need. Be it Jasmine or Rose Tea, you are sure to feel calm and relaxed. Peppermint Tea helps digestion while being a substitute for a fizzy drink. Then there is Green Tea; helping cut those unwanted extra pounds.

Aziz is personally a fan of Gyokuro, a Japanese variation, which also happens to be the finest form of green tea. However, do keep in mind that consumption of Green Tea should be kept within five cups a day.

Learning about Flowering Tea (also known as Blooming Tea) from Aziz was fascinating. It is of the Chinese origin and it is basically tea leaves tied around dried flowers, which bloom in the tea pot when

boiling water is poured.

Aziz also emphasised on the fact that some people have a preference for the first flush of tea as opposed to the second or third. The origin of the tea, the season it is, and the form the tea leaves come in - long leaves or just grains - makes a difference.

For the average Bengali, though, tea is mostly about Black Tea. "It is duddcha, rong



cha

or masala cha.

Because it is a part of our daily routine, we do not really think about what we can do differently." Aziz says disappointingly. He thinks indulging in different variations of the classic Black Tea can be a rather pleasant surprise.

Aziz encourages incorporating spices because not only does that put a twist to

the everyday cup of tea, but also rewards your taste buds for not being risk averse.

He goes on to say, "Being involved in collecting and tasting different kinds of tea also makes you want to know more about the region a particular kind of tea comes from and the history it has". Gaining knowledge while being healthy, that's a win-win.

According to Aziz the upside of this unique hobby does not end here. For him the tea making experience is an exercise that relaxes the mind. It lifts the maker's mood. The aroma fills up your lungs as you breathe in, while the tea leaves dancing about the bubbles, unveiling a beautiful shade of a beautiful colour- help you forget all about anything unpleasant, don't they?

Step outside of your comfort zone and explore the wonderful goodness that is tea. Brewing up a hot, steaming cup of the right kind of tea might be the change you did not know you needed in life.

If all this talk about tea has raised interest in your mind, delve into *Tête-à-tête With Tea* at [www.banglahues.com](http://www.banglahues.com), which is maintained by Paula Aziz and find out more about the variations of different kinds of tea and how to enjoy them.

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**Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed**

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