



BLACK TEA

Black tea, or red tea as it's known in China, is the result of a complete oxidation of the leaf before being fired. First the leaf is spread out and left to wilt naturally, losing its stiffness and much of its weight. Then it's rolled, exposing essential oils to the air and starting the oxidation process. When this is complete, the leaf is heated to stop the process, graded for quality, and packed.

HERBAL INFUSION

Enjoyed for ages, herbal infusions are made from a variety of different plants but not the tea plant (*Camellia sinensis*). Popular for their medicinal and calming qualities, they have unique flavours and are all caffeine-free.

PU-ERH TEA

Pu-erh is a post-fermented tea made from a large leaf varietal grown in Yunnan Province. This tea is often aged, which mellows and refines its flavour and character. It is made either as loose leaf or pressed into a myriad of shapes; round cakes (bingcha), rectangular bricks and birds' nest shape (tuocha) are the most common. Pu-erh can also be pressed into short lengths of bamboo, then dried and stored - a specialty of the Dai people in Xishuangbanna.

Now that you know the names of most kinds of tea, it's time to learn the Tea lingo. Drop these during tea time conversation to score some points on the snob scale!

THE TEA GLOSSARY

Agony of the leaves: The unfurling of tea leaves during steeping. Certain teas provide a spectacular show if steeped in a glass container.

Antioxidant: A compound which retards oxidation.

Astringency: The drying sensation (or bite) in the mouth caused by certain teas.

Bergamot: A citrus oil derived from the bergamot orange used to flavour black tea to make Earl Grey tea.

Blend: Method to establish consistency between lots of teas.

Body: Tea taster's term to denote strength and viscosity of a brewed tea.

Brick Tea: It refers to tea leaves that have been steamed and compressed into bricks. Pu-erh is a common brick tea.

Caffeine: An alkaloid which acts as a Central Nervous System stimulant and diuretic.

Chesty: A term denoting an odour in tea absorbed from the wood of a traditional storage chest.

CTC: Acronym for Cut, Tear, and Curl, a machine process which cuts the withered leaves into uniform particles to facilitate a complete oxidation. Typical of most black tea grown in India and other lowland producing countries, and used in teabags to create a stronger more colourful tea.

Dust: The smallest grade of tea typically associated with lower quality. Dust is prized for its quick extraction and is commonly

used in teabags.

Earl Grey: Traditionally, black tea blend flavoured with bergamot oil; named for the 2nd Earl of Grey, Charles Grey (1764-1845)

Fannings: Small particles of tea one grade larger than Dust produced as a by-product of the tea making process.

Fermentation: More properly termed - Oxidation. Describes the process of enzymic oxidation, where elements in the leaf react with air to create a darker brown-red colour and characteristic aroma to the resulting tea.

Flush: Flush refers to the four separate plucking seasons throughout the year, each known for its distinctive flavour.

Formosa Teas: Tea produced in Taiwan, typically oolong teas.

Golden: Refers to the orange coloured tips present in high quality black tea

Jasmine: Green or Oolong Tea scented with jasmine flowers.

Orange Pekoe: The larger leaves of the tea

plant. It does not refer to flavour characteristics of any tea.

Orthodox: Traditional method for picking and processing teas in India without using CTC technology.

Pan fired: Method of heating leaf and arresting enzymic oxidation of tea.

Pekoe: [PECK-oh] a term used to describe the largest leaves used to produce whole leaf teas. Also refers to an un-distinctive blend of tea. Pronounced 'pek-o'.

Plucking: It is the process of harvesting and collecting tea leaves.

Rolling: It is the process by which withered leaves are rolled to initiate enzymic oxidation.

Tippy: Term denoting tea that contains white or golden tips, indicative of high quality

- LS Desk

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