

How Are Chinese Tea Produced

Contributed by Webmaster
Wednesday, 20 May 2009
Last Updated Wednesday, 20 May 2009

By Jonas Smith

Chinese has been drinking tea for approximately 4,000 years. Along with firewood, rice, oil, salt, sauce, and vinegar, the Chinese considered tea as one of the seven necessities to begin a day.

Types of Tea

The Chinese tea may be classified into five types according to the different methods by which it is processed. Here are the classifications:

Green Tea - is the variety which keeps the original color of the tea leaves without fermentation during processing.

Black Tea - This is known as "red Chinese tea", the type which is fermented before baking. Note also that black tea is a later variety developed on the basis of the green tea.

Wulong Tea - Also known as Oolong Chinese tea, this category represents a variety half way between the green and the black teas. This is being made after partial fermentation.

Compressed Tea - is the kind of Chinese tea which is compressed and hardened into a certain shape. Many people considered this as good for transport and storage and are mainly supplied to the ethnic minorities living in the border areas of the country.

Scented Tea - This kind of Chinese tea is known as "scented" because it is made by mixing fragrant flowers in the tea leaves in the course of processing. The flowers that are commonly used for this purpose include the jasmine and magnolia, among others.

The Tea Production

Chinese has maintained that a new tea plant must grow for five years before its leaves can be picked. The trunk of the old plant must then be cut off to force new stems to grow out of the roots in the following year. This sort of rehabilitation must be repeated as this allows the tea plant to serve for about a hundred years.

The season of tea picking generally depends on the local climate and it varies from area to area. As you all know, China is the homeland of tea. It has tea shrubs as early as five to six thousand years ago, and human cultivation of these plants dates back two thousand years. Today, it was reported that tea is produced in vast areas of China from Hainan Island down in the extreme south to Shandong Province in the north, from Tibet in the southwest to Taiwan across the Straits. To sum up, the Chinese tea grows at more than 20 provinces.

On the shores of West Lake in Hangzhou, where the famous green tea Longjing comes from, it was reported that the picking starts from the end of March and lasts through October. A skilled woman picker can only gather 600 grams of these green tea leaves in a day.

After the harvest, the new leaves must be parched in tea cauldrons. Accordingly, this work has now been largely

mechanized, although the top grade Longjing tea still has to be stir-parched by hand, doing only 250 grams every half hour. Then, the tea cauldrons are heated electrically to a temperature of about 25 degree centigrade or 74 degree Fahrenheit. It then takes four pounds of fresh Chinese tea leaves to produce one pound of parched Chinese tea.

For the processes of grinding, parching, rolling, shaping and drying, different kinds of machines have been developed and built. This work turned out about 100 kilograms of finished Chinese tea an hour, relieving the workers from much of their drudgery.

Information on functions of carbohydrates can be found at the Health And Nutrition site.

{mos_sb_discuss:2}