



How to Tea Guide

Green Tea

Green tea is loaded with antioxidants and nutrients that have a multitude of health benefits including cancer and cardiovascular disease prevention, improved brain function, cholesterol-lowering effects, and more. Green tea contains polyphenols, which include flavanols, flavandiols, flavonoids, and phenolic acids.

Most of the green tea polyphenols are flavonols, commonly known as catechins. There are four kinds of catechins mainly found in green tea, epicatechin (EC), epigallocatechin (EGC), epicatechin gallate (ECG), and epigallocatechin gallate (EGCG). EGCG is the most abundant (as well as the most potent) catechin in green tea, making up about 10-50% of the total catechin content.

The USDA Database for the Flavonoid Content of Selected Foods Release shows that the way green tea is produced has a dramatic effect on its flavonoid content. The database proves that the more processed the tea is, the less catechins it has. Instant and bottled green tea are shown to contain 12 mg of catechins, flavored green teas have 43 mg, and decaffeinated has 56 mg, while regular green tea contains 127 mg of catechins.

Processing

Green tea is a type of tea that is harvested and then quickly preserved. The most popular, widely consumed types of green teas are from China and Japan. The Chinese style of green tea is characterized by pan firing, where tea leaves are heated in a basket, pan or mechanized rotating drum to halt the oxidation process. The Japanese style of green tea is characterized by steaming, where tea leaves are treated briefly with steam heat within hours of plucking to both halt the oxidation process and bring out the rich green color of both the tea leaves and the final brewed tea.

Selecting Green Tea

When choosing green tea it is best to use your senses. First, look at the color of the leaf. The way green tea has been processed shows up in the color. For example, Japanese green teas (sencha & bancha) which are steamed, tend to have a more intense green color, whereas Chinese green teas (Dragonwell & Chun mee) which are pan-fired, tend to have a more golden or yellowish color.

Upon brewing green tea is typically green, yellow or light brown in color. Age will affect the color of the tea water, causing it to be brown or very murky green.



Second, smell the tea if you can. Green tea should have a light, fresh, soothing fragrance. Japanese green teas, like sencha, will smell more grassy while Chinese green tea, like dragonwell, tend to smell vaguely nutty. If there is no smell to the dry leaves, they are very suspect. As it grows stale, the fragrance will be replaced gradually by mustiness.

Next, touch the tea leaves when possible. A good green tea feels smooth, not coarse, and the wet leaves should be tender. It should not crumble easily; if it does, it has been baked too long or is too old.

Finally, taste the tea. Green tea should taste fresh, not stale, and should not be too astringent. Chinese green teas tend to be fairly mellow and the flavor can be described as nutty and flowery. Japanese green teas are more bold and astringent with an earthy flavor similar to wheatgrass and seaweed.

Buying & Storing Green Tea

Buy organic green tea in order to limit pesticide residue, from a reputable company that can tell you when and how the tea was processed and packaged. Green tea is less oxidized than other teas, making it fresher and more delicate. It should be consumed within six months to a year of purchase for maximum flavor. Store your tea in a cool, dark, dry place, away from light, oxygen, moisture and other fragrant foods.

- Teavana Gyokuro
- Tazo China Green Tips
- Rishi Bancha Japanese Green Tea, organic
- Yogi Pure Green
- Celestial Seasonings Authentic Green Tea

Preparing Green Tea

Here are a few general tea brewing tips for making the perfect cup:

- Use fresh, pure, cold filtered water.
- For one person about 2 grams of loose leaf tea per 8 oz cup of water
- Use an electric kettle with temperature control (around 160-180 degrees) or allow boiled water to rest before pouring it over green tea leaves.
- Cover steeping tea to keep all the heat in the steeping vessel, from 30 to 60 seconds for early harvest, more delicate teas to 2 to 3 minutes for regular harvest, more robust teas; most high-quality loose leaf teas can be steeped multiple times.



Decaffeinated Tea

The caffeine from tea is extracted after fermentation, and the dull, flavorless leaves are disdained by true tea lovers. Usually decaf tea is blended with flavors to give it some character. Unfortunately, because there are no standards set by the FDA for decaffeinated tea, manufacturers will sometimes add black tea to the decaf leaves to give them flavor, thus spiking caffeine levels.

Also of note is the presence of chemical residue in decaf tea and the decaffeinating method is a solvent process. One study showed that residues of methylene chloride (a known carcinogen) were four times (400 percent) higher in decaf tea compared to decaf coffee.

Caffeine-Free Herbal Teas

People have been brewing leaves, fruits, flowers, roots barks and berries for centuries. Herbal tea comes in a great diversity of types and flavors. It is caffeine-free, but watch for added herbs such as yerba mate, kola nut, bissy nut and guarana as they contain caffeine.

Herbal teas can be soothing when you're suffering from minor symptoms, but they are primarily formulated for taste enjoyment and general health enhancement.



Immune Stimulating Blends

Blends contain any of the following tonic herbs, known as adaptogens (herbs that strengthen or enhance the immune system, nervous system and/or glandular system while they help the body cope with stress): Siberian ginseng (Eleutherococcus), Panax ginseng, astragalus, shizandra, Echinacea, ashwaganda, reishi mushrooms, licorice.

- Republic of Tea: Ginseng Peppermint, Organic Temple of Health
- Traditional Medicinals: Echinacea Plus, Reishi Defense, Double Ginseng
- Celestial Seasonings: Emperor's Choice, Echinacea Herb, Ginseng Plus
- Yogi Tea: Ginseng NRG Tea, Echinacea Special Formula

Digestive Teas

Many herbs have digestion-stimulating properties. They can help relieve gas and heartburn, stimulate the flow of gastric juices, relax spasms and cramps, and dispel nausea or queasiness. Look for digestive blends that contain any of the following: ginger, anise seeds, thyme, chamomile, hyssop, peppermint, spearmint, lemon balm, fennel, coriander, chicory, catnip and cardamom.

- Republic of Tea: Orange Ginger Mint, Organic Mint Fields
- Traditional Medicinals: Ginger Aid, Eater's Digest
- Celestial Seasonings: Grandma's Tummy Mint, GingerEase
- Yogi Tea: Lemon Ginger, Stomach E-Z, Ginger Tea
- Tazo: Refresh

Sedative Teas

The number-one selling herbal tea in the US is Celestial Seasonings Sleepytime tea. After a tough day filled with stress (and usually caffeine), Americans have a tough time settling down enough to fall asleep. Sedative teas are mild in action, due to dose. Classic sedative herbs include: chamomile, hops, linden flowers, lavender, passion flower, skullcap, valerian, tilia buds and white zapote.

- Republic of Tea: Chamomile Lemon
- Traditional Medicinals: Nighty Night
- Celestial Seasonings: Sleepytime
- Yogi Tea: Bedtime Tea

Stress-Relief Teas

These teas differ from sedative teas because they are designed to help you cope with stress but not become sleepy. Two herbs stand out in this arena, but have completely different actions. Siberian ginseng helps the body cope with stress. Kava, a muscle relaxant with a long tradition of use in the South Pacific, can actually help relieve overtensed



muscles. You may want to drink Siberian ginseng tea frequently, but kava should be saved for those times when you really need help relaxing and letting go.

- Republic of Tea: Ginseng Peppermint
- Celestial Seasonings: Tension Tamer
- Yogi Tea: Kava Kava Special Formula, Calming Tea

Stimulating Spice Teas

Spicy teas will warm you internally and stimulate your digestion and elimination. Spice teas require a longer brewing time and are best simmered for ten minutes to bring out their spicy flavor.

- Republic of Tea: Rainforest Tea, Cardamom Cinnamon
- Celestial Seasonings: Bengal Spice
- Yogi Tea: Look for various blends wither Original (loose pack) or in tea bags with flavors such as Tahitian Vanilla and Hazelnut Crème
- Tazo: Spice
- Sattwa Chai: Herbal Chai Spicy Peppermint Concentrate, Shanti Herbal

Fruit Teas

These teas can contribute significant vitamin C to your diet, and are delicious iced. Because they have a strong citrus accent, they are refreshing and thirst quenching.

- Republic of Tea: Alpine Flowers Tea, Lemon Wintergreen, Kid's Cuppa, Organic Flowering Herb Tea
- Celestial Seasonings: Any of the Zinger blends
- Tazo: Passion, Wild Sweet Orange

Rooibos Tea

This caffeine-free tea is unique in the herb tea world. Rooibos (which means “red bush” and is pronounced “roy-boss”) is produced only in the tip of South Africa. It is the only herb tea that is fermented like black tea, producing a deep red color and body similar to black tea but without black tea’s astringency. Rooibos contains polyphenols just like green tea, giving it similar antioxidant properties. Tests show rooibos to have slightly less antioxidant activity than green tea, but more than black or oolong tea. Rooibos also contains vitamin C, minerals, quercetin, luteolin, rutin and numerous other flavanoids that contribute to its antispasmodic, hypoallergenic and antioxidant properties. Rooibos is gentle, soothing and delicious. It is a good alternative to caffeine-containing green tea.

You can look for rooibos at your local herb shop or try the following herbal teas that have rooibos in their base:

- Republic of Tea: Rainforest Tea, Desert Sage
- Select Tea: Ruby Burst