



# Tea Manual

*A complete guide to C&P's tea menu,  
tea theory, vocabulary and customer FAQs*

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# Introduction

The purpose of this manual is to offer Clement and Pekoe staff an introduction to not only tea in general, but to our tea menu specifically. This will give you the vocabulary to answer questions about tea, make suggestions to customers and, hopefully, guide you to a greater understanding of the product you both serve and sell.

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## **In this manual you will learn:**

- The differences between the five main tea varieties (black, green, white, oolong, puerh) and their distinguishing features.
- The main tea producing regions and which ones are pertinent to our menu.
- Basic issues surrounding brewing a cup of tea (best water, temperature, amount of tea).
- How infusions differ from tea.
- An appreciation for the ‘theatre’ of tea at the tea counter.
- General tea-related vocabulary located in the glossary.

Ultimately, you are your own best teacher. You can read all about the teas, but it means very little if you do not try the teas and develop your palate. They may taste all the same in the beginning, but over time you will find nuances within the cup that allow you to tell the story of tea in your own words. Doesn't that sound exciting? Yes. It does.

Now, go forth and drink deeply.

It is important to understand that, technically, the word 'tea' should only be used for infusions made from the leaves and/or buds of the tea plant, *Camellia Sinensis*. Teas referred to in this manner (black, green, white, oolong, puerh) are all products of the same plant, *Camellia Sinensis*. The differences in colour, taste, aroma, etc, all have to do with when and how the tea is harvested (plucked), how it is processed after harvesting, and where it is grown (terroir).

It is a useful tool to have a loose chronology in one's head when discussing something as wide-ranging as tea and its history. The following is a *VERY* quick snapshot of when tea was discovered, where it was discovered and how it came to dominate as the world's number one beverage (excepting water... hydration first).

- Circa 2737 BCE: Tea is 'discovered' by mythical sovereign Shen Nong, 'The Father of Tea', in China's Yunnan province. Tea trees still grow in this region and produce some of the most revered teas in the world.
- 2nd Century CE: Between the discovery of tea and the 2nd C, the Chinese learn to cultivate the plant, process the leaves, and incorporate it into a regular part of their daily diet. It now begins to travel west and south on the trade route known as The Silk Road. Compressed into cakes or blocks and transported by mule, tea was exchanged for goods such as salt, cloth, iron goods and horses.
- 6th -9th Century: Tea begins to travel to Korea and Japan. Buddhist monks were responsible for introducing tea to their home countries and often tea gardens were started on the grounds of monasteries and temples. This is a tradition that continues to this day.
- Early 17th C: Dutch and Portuguese traders bring tea to Europe.
- 1600-1834: The domination of tea in the English-speaking world is due almost exclusively to The English East India Company. This monopoly would not be broken until ended by government decree. The history of The East India Company, a.k.a The Honourable Company, is fraught with tales of piracy, intrigue, and general hair-raising adventure. A good read.
- 1773: Boston Tea Party. Due to unfair taxation on tea in America, Americans reject tea outright and switch to coffee. This is never put right and America is forever lost to quality tea drinking.
- 1820-1850: Tea is discovered growing wild in India's Assam province. This provided relief from the stranglehold China had on tea exports. Tea gardens were developed and the first Assam teas were sent to London by the 1830s. Tea garden development continued in Darjeeling and Nilgiri Hills.
- 1870s: After an initial attempt at growing coffee was thwarted by an island-wide fungus, Ceylon (modern day Sri Lanka) switched to tea production and quickly became one of the world's leading tea producers.
- 1950s: Tea garden development in Kenya. Known mostly for CTC (see glossary) teas, supplying to the tea bag market.

# Tea Regions

The following is a brief list of where some of the most well-known teas are grown. This list is not comprehensive as tea is grown in 68 countries.

<b>India</b>	Assam, Darjeeling, Nilgiri Hills
<b>China</b>	Yunnan, Anhui, Fujian
<b>Sri Lanka</b>	Even though SL changed its name in 1972, their tea is still branded as 'Ceylon'
<b>Japan</b>	Famous for green tea
<b>Taiwan</b>	Home of oolongs
<b>Kenya</b>	Often you will be asked if we carry Kenyan teas or tea from Africa. Aside from Rooibos (discussed later), no. African teas are not generally known for their quality and mostly provide leaf for the teabag industry.

## Black Tea

When someone asks for a cup of tea, they are generally referring to black tea, more specifically, a breakfast blend. One of the most basic questions you will get concerning our tea menu is, '*What is the difference between Breakfast Blend I and II?*'

**The answer:** Both are Assam/Ceylon blends (that is a blend of Assam tea and Ceylon tea... see Tea Regions for reference). BBI has more Ceylon, making it slightly fruity, whereas BBII has more Assam, making it a bit deeper, perhaps better with milk.

### ***Why is black tea black?***

Black tea is black because of the process of oxidation. Oxidation is a chemical reaction between the juices in the tea leaves and oxygen in the air. This is the same as cutting an apple in half and watching the flesh turn brown. As tea leaves oxidize, they turn from green to brown. The longer they oxidize the darker in colour they become and the darker the tea liquor will be.

Oxidation can be halted by the application of heat to the leaves before they are rolled or crushed.

Black teas are infused at 95°- 98°F with a steeping time of 3-5 minutes.

It is important to note that tea bag tea, whether it is black or green, requires less time for steeping.

# Famous Black Teas

## Darjeeling

Darjeeling teas come from India. They are sometimes known as ‘the champagne of teas’ due to their desirability on the world market.

The best Darjeelings are 1st Flush teas, with a notable exception being ‘Margaret’s Hope’ Darjeeling, a famous 2nd Flush tea. Margaret’s Hope is not a tea we currently carry due to its very high price. People will occasionally ask, declaring they would pay any price for it, however, when confronted with a 50g bag of MH for something like €30, they might feel differently.

Like champagne, Darjeeling cannot be grown anywhere except in Darjeeling. Currently, statistics show that more Darjeeling is sold on the world market than is being produced in Darjeeling, leading experts to believe that tea from Nepal, most likely, is being sold as counterfeit Darjeeling. Identity theft is everywhere, even if you are a tea.

**Characteristics:** *Light, delicate, floral, often with hints of muscatel grape. Not taken with milk.*

## Assam

Located in northeast India, this is one of the best varieties for a morning brew. Assam is a good bet if someone wants to try something a bit different, but not too far off the beaten path. Unlike almost all other teas, Assams are prized as 2nd Flush teas, as the deeper flavour is the most desirable characteristic.

**Characteristics:** *Strong, malty, deep. Acceptable with milk.*

## Ceylon

Ceylon tea grows all over the island nation of Sri Lanka off the southern coast of India, but the best gardens are located in the mountainous central area, outside Nuwara Eliya in the Uva district.

**Characteristics:** *Minerality, lightness, clarity, and a slight flavour of stone fruit. Best without milk.*

## Keemun

A classic tea from the famous Anhui province of China. Noted for its lightness.

## Earl Grey

Earl Grey is a flavoured black tea. The flavour in question is bergamot, a citrus fruit grown in southern Italy. Occasionally people will ask for “Lady Grey” - flavoured with orange oil. This is not a tea we currently carry.

# Green Tea

As black tea is black because of oxidation, green tea retains its natural green colour due to the absence of oxidation during processing. This is achieved through applying heat very shortly after the harvesting of leaves. The two main differences in heat application break down to the Japanese process and the Chinese process.

## Japan

Oxidation is arrested through steam heat. Steam is applied in short spurts to retain colour. The longer tea is steamed, the more the cell wall breaks down, releasing chlorophyll and polyphenols into the liquor. This creates a more intense flavour, as well as a more cloudy, thicker tea with obvious particle break down in the cup.

## China

Oxidation is arrested through 'panning' or wok-drying. In this process, tea leaves are pressed into a hot wok, often by hand, and worked to both shape the tea and develop flavour. Compared to Japanese greens, these are quite clear in the cup, without the intensity of colour, and sometimes taste.

If you compare Chinese and Japanese green tea leaves, you can easily see the difference in drying. Look at our Lung Ching (Chinese) vs Yanagi Bancha (Japanese). The bancha is much grassier looking, springier and fresher looking. By comparison, the Lung Ching is a bit faded in colour, with very flat, uniform leaves. The Lung Ching is quite literally, cooked.

## *Is Darjeeling a Green Tea?*

Sometimes. Because tea is all made from the same plant, it is technically possible to make a variety of tea types depending solely on the harvest and the process of drying. So yes, Darjeeling can be processed as a green tea. One of the most well-known is from the Nagri Estate, a 100% bio-dynamic farm. We do not currently carry any green Darjeelings at C&P. (Darjeelings are also processed as white and oolong teas.)

C&P infuses green teas at 80°F

Japanese greens need only infuse for 1.5 minutes, while Chinese greens need to infuse for 3 minutes.

## Famous Green Teas

Sencha vs Bancha: The best senchas are generally 1st Flushes, meticulously sorted after the pluck. Later summer/autumn harvests are not considered as fine and are often used as base tea for blends. Banchas are harvested between or after the main sencha harvests and are not generally as rigorously sorted, with bits of stem and stalk not uncommon in the final product. The taste is generally not as nuanced as finer senchas.

### Lung Ching

AKA Long Jing, aka Dragons Well, aka Dragons Fountain Tea. This is a GI protected tea that can only be produced in the village of Long Jing.

### Genmaicha

Bancha and roasted rice blend with nutty, savoury notes. Because this is usually a 50/50 blend, there is less caffeine in this particular tea.

### Fukamushi

Japanese sencha steamed at approximately 120 seconds. This is a longer steam than most senchas and is becoming increasingly popular in Japan.

## A Note on Matcha

Matcha – The simplest definition of matcha is that it is powdered green tea. However, like most aspects of tea, it is easy to drill down and discover many levels of specificities.

Matcha in its unground state is known as tencha and begins as 1st flush sencha with all stalks and stems removed. To make tencha, the tea bushes are shaded for 21 days before plucking. This cuts out 90% of the sunlight. As a result, the leaves contain fewer bitter polyphenols and more of the sweet L-theanine amino acids. The tea is then plucked, steamed, and dried. Then the stalks, stems, and veins are separated from the leaf. The tencha is then ground to a fine powder in traditional stone mills. Because matcha is a drink whereby the whole leaf is ingested, there is a greater amount of caffeine, L-theanine, and polyphenols consumed.

These 1st flush teas are used for ceremonial grade matcha, while the later flushes are used for food grade matcha.

To make matcha we use a recipe of 1g of matcha to 120ml water. We do not offer matcha lattes at C&P.

If someone is looking for matcha to make lattes at home, steer them toward the less expensive matcha. It is food grade and more appropriate for adulterated matcha.



# White Tea

This classic 1st flush is considered to be tea in its purest form due to the fact that very little is done to the bud (at least in terms of oxidation) after it is plucked.

Skilled labour is required not only to ensure a meticulous pluck, but also to handle the bud carefully afterwards in order to assure minimal bruising. The bud itself is covered in small downy hairs (bai hao) which act as a defence mechanism against both frost and insects.

As the bud develops these hairs fall off, which is why getting the bud as early as possible is required to maintain its silvery/white colouring. There is no intentional oxidation during the post-harvest process, although a certain degree of spontaneous oxidation is unavoidable.

There are two types of classic white tea, ours being the bud only variety, known as Silver Needle (Yin Zhen) harvested in the early spring.

The second variety is White Peony (Bai Mu Dan) which is achieved through a traditional 'bud and 2 leaf' pluck in late April. Both of these types come from Fujian Province, but lesser varieties are being grown around the world.

Contrary to the common belief that white tea is caffeine free, the hairs on the bud are in fact pure caffeine. While light on flavour, it still packs a full caffeine punch.

**Characteristics:** *Light in the cup, light on the palate.*

This is infused at 80°F for 3-5 minutes.

# Oolong Tea

Oolong, also known as 'The Philosopher's Tea', is traditionally grown and processed in Taiwan (formerly Formosa). Some of the best oolongs come from farms growing at altitudes over 1000 meters (3000 ft).

There are two types of oolong, both of which have different oxidation points.

## Dark Oolong

This is a large, open leaf tea with an oxidation point between 35-60%. The leaves are big and twisted and look like small twigs. Oolong itself means 'black dragon' and it is said you can see the dragon's profile in each dry twisted leaf.

## Balled or Jade Oolong

These have a lower oxidation point, 20-30%, which allows the leaf to maintain its green colour. The leaves are panned to arrest oxidation and then wrapped in cotton. Mechanized pressure is applied, repeatedly, until the leaves take on the scrunched ball shape they are known for. Both of the oolongs C&P stocks (Dark Pearl and Milky Oolong) are of the balled variety.

## Milky Oolong

This is a specialty oolong with rich notes of caramel. If someone comes in asking to try an oolong, this is not representative of what oolongs are. However, if someone is looking for a dessert tea, or something similar to Tom Crean, this is a good suggestion.

Unlike black tea, the aim is not to burst the cell wall of the leaf during oxidation, but instead to achieve a creeping oxidation along the edges and in the veins of the leaf.

**Characteristics:** *Light, floral notes.*

As for the dark oolongs, they are lighter on the palate than might be expected considering the deep colouring of the tea liquor. A three minute infusion time is sufficient for both balled or dark oolongs.

# Puerh

Of all the teas discussed, puerh is possibly the most complicated in terms of its process and the richest in terms of its history. Also known as 'dark' tea, Puerh was named after the trading post in Yunnan Province where it was first traded for goods in 10C AD (see tea chronology). To make transport easier, the tea was packed into bricks, or cakes, and was then subject to natural fermentation during the 8-10 month journey on horseback.

Today, all puerh still originates from Yunnan, but minus the equine sweat along the way. Like the oolongs, there are two varieties that we will focus on:

## Raw (sheng) Puerh

This is the traditional method for making puerh and requires at least 5-10 years of ageing, but can, and often will, go on even longer. The best puerhs are made using buds and shoots plucked from ancient wild tea trees in Yunnan. The following process then creates what is basically a green tea. Puerh in this state is called maocha and contains various bacteria from the air in Yunnan. The maocha is then gently steamed, wrapped in cotton, and compressed. These compressed tea cakes are then stored in humidity and temperature-controlled facilities which then provokes slow bacterial fermentation, shaping the character and taste for future drinking.

## Ripe (shou) Puerh

In the 1970s, a process was developed to speed up the fermentation process in order to get the tea to market more quickly. The tea is processed the same way until the maocha stage. Instead of being pressed into cakes, the maocha is heaped into piles and sprayed with water. The tea is then covered with plastic sheets and left to ferment on its own. After a few weeks or months, the tea is either pressed into cakes or left loose and then placed in temperature-controlled storage facilities to mature.

Ripe puerhs are rarely aged longer than 10 years. The puerh carried at C&P is a ripe puerh aged for 12 months.

**Characteristics:** *Dark liquor, deep leathery flavour with earthy notes and even slightly fishy.*

Traditionally not taken with milk, but milk does cut some of the intensity of the flavour and is not unpleasant. 2-3 minutes for infusion.

# Miscellaneous Tea

## Rooibos

While not technically a tea, rooibos (literally: red bush) is a popular decaffeinated alternative to the teas previously discussed. This infusion is from a shrub that grows exclusively in the small mountainous region of the Western Cape in South Africa. All rooibos originates from this region. Like black tea, rooibos is oxidized to achieve its distinctive reddish/brown colour. While there is a market for 'green' rooibos, it is not huge, and many growers are disinclined to create green rooibos as the process is costlier than that of traditional rooibos.

C&P rooibos is a certified organic tea.

**Characteristics:** *Fresh tobacco, slightly leathery.* Can be taken with milk.

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## Fruit and Herbal Infusions

As discussed earlier, fruit and herbal infusions are not, strictly speaking, teas. These are dried fruit and herbs that offer a hot beverage devoid of caffeine. Certain properties can be attributed to these teas (peppermint can be energizing, camomile can be calming, etc.) however, since we are not medical professionals, it is unwise to engage in discussions with customers about the supposed health-giving benefits of what these infusions (or the tea for that matter) can do.

Our organic peppermint and organic camomile are shipped in directly from Egypt. The camomile is whole flower, which is a good selling point, since most camomiles are crushed and appear to be nothing but yellow dust.

While you don't need to yell this from the rooftops, it is important to be aware that liquorice is something to be avoided if high blood pressure is a concern. However, most people aren't going to be drinking enough of it to warrant a health threat.

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## Yellow Tea

Like the more well-known white teas, yellow tea is an all bud tea which requires careful handling during the pluck and subsequent processing. It is a rare tea for the western market as it is both time-consuming and expensive to produce.

We do not currently stock yellow tea at C&P.

**Characteristics:** *Bright gold in the cup, delicate, but with more body than white tea and a longer finish.* Infusion time of 3-4 minutes.

## Brewing Basics

As café professionals, it is important to speak coherently about basic questions customers might have concerning home brewing. This applies to either tea or coffee. The following are a few FAQs that might come up and the agreed upon C&P responses.

**Q:** I like loose tea, but it never seems to be strong enough. I always go back to the teabag.

**A:** Loose tea is generally a larger leaf than what is in your teabag and requires longer infusion to release the flavour. Let the loose tea infuse for around three minutes. You will find you get a better flavour with a little patience. Always wait until it is fully infused before adding milk, otherwise the milk will inhibit infusion and your tea will be weak.

**Q:** What is the best temperature to brew my black/green/white tea at?

**A:** We brew our tea at 90°/80°/80°. If you do not have a temperature control kettle, leave the kettle off the boil for about five minutes before infusing green or white tea.

**Q:** My tea never tastes as good at home. What am I doing wrong?

**A:** Try using filtered water as opposed to unfiltered water straight off the tap. Also, check your kettle. Does it need to be descaled? Always use fresh water in the kettle, never water that has been previously boiled. Distilled water is best avoided as well.  
How much tea are you using? One teaspoon of tea per cup is generally sufficient.  
If you have scales, aim for 3g of tea per 200ml water.  
Don't overbrew! This makes a huge difference in taste. (see previously listed brew times)

**Q:** What should I store my tea in?

**A:** An air-tight, light-protected jar or tin in the press. A C&P branded caddy fits the bill!

Working the tea counter requires a bit of initiative in terms of making sales happen. First and foremost, it is about being approachable. This is more easily achieved if you are engaged with tasks around the tea counter (dusting, refilling stocks, or best, helping other customers) as opposed to looking at your phone or sighing repeatedly as you stare into the middle distance.

### **Tea Counter Dos and Don'ts:**

If a customer seems interested in a particular tea, **DO** pull out the tea caddy and let them get a good whiff of what's inside. **DON'T** let them pull the caddies out themselves. This will avoid possible spilling of the tea. **DO** hold the caddy up for the customer to inhale. It is a bit of showmanship, a flourish, a sense of customer service from times gone by.

If you have a customer interested in several teas, **DON'T** remove all the lids at one go. One lid off at a time, then immediately replace the lid before opening another caddy. The reasoning behind this is twofold. One, you do not want the air muddled with too many different scents which will confuse the customer's nose. Two, too many lids off means you will in all probability put the wrong lid on the wrong caddy. The fragrance of the tea is absorbed in to the lid, so you would not want summerfruit's lid going on Earl Grey's caddy. Can you imagine? Chaos!

If a customer is shopping for a gift, start a conversation about what it is the recipient might like. If the customer is from North America, bring to their attention 'Irish Breakfast Blend'. North Americans love items that are labelled with the country in which they are travelling. (Why else do they wear sweatshirts and ball caps emblazoned with DUBLIN? Will they forget where they are?)

Always let a customer know you are available for questions. If they are just browsing, that is fine, but at least they know they have been acknowledged and can approach you if they require assistance.

If boxed merchandise is being purchased, always grab stock from the back office. Leave the display item on the shelf until it is the last available. If you sell the last of something, let a manager know.

If someone is ordering several bags of tea, **DON'T** feel rushed as you put it all together. Remember, the weighing out of tea and sealing of the bags is all a bit of a show. Trust us, they are enjoying it.

# Glossary

- Agony of the Leaves** - Expression used to describe the unfurling of the tea leaf during the steep in hot water.
- Assam** - Region in India which produces traditional 2nd flush black teas.
- Bancha** - Green tea harvested between or after Sencha harvests. Not considered as fine a tea as sencha and not as rigorously sorted, meaning twigs and courser leaves are common in the final product.
- CTC** - Short for cut, tear, curl, this is a tea process whereby tea is chopped into uniform pieces primarily for use in the tea bag industry. CTC is not considered fine tea and is mostly produced in Kenya and Eastern Africa. The opposite of Orthodox tea.
- Dark Tea** - Chinese name for Puerh.
- Darjeeling** - Region in India which produces some of the most highly prized teas on the world market. Also known as 'the champagne of teas.'
- Flush** - Generally refers to the harvest time for particular teas. First and second flush are the most common flushes, with first flushes being the more highly prized. The exception to this is Assam tea. Second flushes are the more desirable harvests with that particular tea.
- Hojicha** - A roasted green tea sometimes made only with stems from the tea plant. Because of its woody flavour, it is often appealing to coffee drinkers.
- L-theanine** - Amino acid found in black and green tea considered a 'good mood' enhancer.
- Maocha** - Puerh tea prior to fermentation.
- Matcha** - Powdered green tea from Japan. Traditionally used in Japanese tea ceremonies.
- Orthodox tea** - Traditionally produced tea, either by hand or by purpose-built machines which sort loose tea based on size for later grading. The opposite of CTC production tea.
- Polyphenols** - Loosely, antioxidant properties found in tea.
- Sencha** - Fine Japanese green tea. The best senchas are generally first flush.
- Tencha** - Matcha in its unpowdered form.