

TEA





A strong and energizing drink, tea is made by soaking the leaves of the tea plant in hot water. Tea is especially popular in Asia, the United Kingdom, many former British colonies, and the Middle East.





The most common types of tea are black and green, both of which are made from the same plant. They both contain caffeine, a chemical that makes people feel alert. They come in several forms, including loose leaves, tea bags, and powder.





Black and green tea come from the leaves and buds of a plant that scientists call *Camellia sinensis*. The plant likely grew first in China but now grows in many parts of Asia, especially India. Countries in Eastern Europe, Africa, and South America also grow tea.



Mature Camellia Sinensis Leaf

Leaves are simple, alternate, evergreen, 2-4" long, and ovate-elliptic in shape.

Green lateral veins

Serrated margin

Light green blade when young, deep green when mature

Green to reddish brown midrib

Smooth-stemmed petiole

Camellia Sinensis Flower

The fragrant flowers are about 1-inch across, perfect solitary with radial petal lobes.



First, workers pick the tea plant's leaves and buds. To make black tea, they spread the leaves out to dry. Next, they roll the leaves and let them ferment, or absorb oxygen. Workers then blast the leaves with hot air until they are black. To make green tea, workers put freshly picked leaves in a steamer. Next, they roll and dry the leaves, which stay green..







According to legend, people first drank tea in China in about 2700 BC. At first people used tea as medicine. In about the 3rd century AD it became a daily drink. In about the 1100s the Japanese developed a formal tea-drinking ceremony.



The Dutch and the English brought tea from China to Europe in the 1600s. The English later started a tradition of drinking tea in the afternoon. Tea also spread to Europe's colonies.





Russian people prefer to drink tea with lemon and sugar. Traditional pastry is necessary.



