



The Tea Plant, *Camellia sinensis*

All true teas are processed from the leaves and/or stems of a shrub called **Camellia sinensis**. Depending upon where (in full or partial sun, or in the shade) and when (late spring, early summer, fall) the leaves are cultivated, plucked and handled, the character of the tea changes.

Green teas -- *ryoku cha* -- are green because enzymes responsible for oxidation have been prevented from doing their (dark and discoloring) work.

The Japanese halt oxidation by steaming freshly picked leaves, while the Chinese typically pan-fire or roast tea leaves to achieve similar results. The steaming process accentuates latent vegetal, marine, and herbaceous tones in tea -- qualities that are prized by the Japanese. In much the same way that wine enthusiasts throughout the world eagerly anticipate the arrival of *Beaujolais nouveau*, tea connoisseurs everywhere keenly await Japanese ***shin cha*** at market.

Various kinds of **JAPANESE GREEN TEAS** 日本の緑茶

Main varieties are:

煎茶 SENCHA (leaf tea)

茎茶 KUKI CHA (stem tea)

深むし茶 FUKAMUSHI CHA (deeply steamed to stabilize)

玄米茶 GENMAI CHA (green tea mixed with roasted rice)

焙じ茶 HŌJI CHA (roasted green tea)



PREPARING to DRINK different kinds of GREEN TEA



煎茶 **SENCHA** (high quality leaf tea) • 番茶 **BANCHA** (lower grade *sencha*)

玄米茶 **GENMAICHA**(*sencha* with roasted rice) • 番茶 **KUKICHA** (stems)

TEA: 10 grams (2 Tablespoons) in pot for 3-4 portions

WATER: 80cc (scant 1/3 cup) per portion (serve at 80°C or 175° F)

PREPARATION: pour boiled water into cups; let stand 30 seconds

(this warms cups and cools water) before pouring water over leaves in pot. Steep 1 minute (without swishing about) and serve (pour half portions in each cup, then repeat to fill all cups).

For subsequent infusions, use slightly hotter water and swirl pot gently. Pour immediately.

玉露 **GYOKURO** (shade-grown, leaf tea)

TEA: 10 grams (2 Tablespoons) in pot for 3-4 portions

WATER: 80cc (scant 1/3 cup) per portion (serve at 60-65°C or 145° F)

PREPARATION: pour boiled water into cups; let stand 1 minute

(this warms cups and cools water) before pouring water over leaves in pot. Steep 1 & 1/2 to 2 minutes (without swishing about) and serve (pour half portions in each cup, then repeat to fill all cups). For subsequent infusions, use slightly hotter water. Do NOT allow leaves to soak in hot water for any length of time. Pour out steeped tea completely from pot.

抹茶 **MATCHA** (shade-grown, pulverized first flush leaf)

TEA: 2 grams (about 1/4 teaspoon) per portion, placed in bowl

WATER: 50cc (3-4 Tablespoons) per portion; 60°C or 140° F)

PREPARATION: ladle water over tea; each portion whisked until frothy

粉茶 **KONACHA** (“dust” by-product of processing *sencha* and *gyokuro* leaf tea)

TEA: 7-8 grams (1 & 1/2 Tablespoons) for 3-4 portions

WATER: 80cc (scant 1/3 cup) per portion (serve at 90°C or 195° F)

PREPARATION: place tea in a strainer in pot, pour water over tea; let stand 1 minute.

Serve (pour half portions in each cup, then repeat to fill all cups). For subsequent infusions, use boiling water and swirl pot gently. Pour immediately.

焙じ茶 **HŌJICHA** (roasted leaf tea)

TEA: 12 grams (3 Tablespoons) in pot for 3-4 portions

WATER: 80cc (scant 1/3 cup) per portion

PREPARATION: Pour boiling water (100°C or 212° F) over leaves in pot. Steep 30 seconds and serve (pour half portions, then repeat to fill all cups). For subsequent infusions, pour immediately. Often served chilled.

深蒸茶 **FUKAMUSHICHA** (shade-grown, pulverized first flush leaf)

TEA: 7-8 grams (1 & 1/2 Tablespoons) for 3-4 portions

WATER: 80cc (scant 1/3 cup) per portion (serve at 90°C or 195° F)

PREPARATION: pour water into pot over leaves; let stand 30 seconds

Serve (pour half portions in each cup, then repeat to fill all cups). For subsequent infusions, can use slightly hotter water and swirl pot gently. Pour immediately.

JAPANESE TEAS that do NOT contain tea leaves



pulverized kelp roasted barley salt-preserved blossoms buckwheat grain

昆布茶 KOMBU CHA (pulverized kelp)

“TEA”: (pulverized kelp) 1gram (1/2 t) per portion

WATER: 100cc (1/3 cup per portion)

PREPARATION: Pour boiling water (100°C/212°F) over powder in cup.
Stir to dissolve and serve immediately.

むぎ茶 MUGI CHA (roasted barley)

“TEA”: 1 (American) cup roasted barley in pot for 20-25 portions OR
1 pre-packaged bag meant for cold water infusion

WATER: 1 liter (about 1 quart)

PREPARATION: Place roasted barley in pot, add cold water and bring to a boil. Adjust heat and simmer for 5-6 minutes. Remove from stove and let the mixture steep 10 minutes. Strain. Often served chilled. OR place one pre-packaged bag (meant for cold water infusion) in 1 liter (about 1 quart) cold water and let steep 20 minutes. Remove and discard the bag; chill the beverage

櫻湯 SAKURA YU (salt-preserved blossoms)

“TEA”: salted cherry blossoms; one per portion

WATER: 30-40cc (2T) per portion

PREPARATION: Shake away excess salt from blossoms. Place a single blossom in each cup. Pour boiled water cooled to 80 °C/175°F over blossom in each cup. Steep 30 seconds and sip.

そば茶 SOBA CHA (buckwheat grain)

“TEA”: 1/2 (American) cup buckwheat in pot for 20-25 portions

WATER: 1 liter (about 1 quart)

PREPARATION: Place buckwheat in pot, add cold water and bring to a boil. Adjust heat and simmer for 10 minutes. Remove from stove and let the mixture steep 10 minutes. Strain. Often served chilled.