

Story



Tea Facts From A to Z: 26 Things You Didn't Know About Tea

Tea A-Z: 26 interesting facts about tea - From where the tea bag was invented to the natural mosquito repellent found in it's leaves

By FDL on December 03, 2011

Astrotea. You can use tea leaves to read the future. Just leave a small amount of tea in the bottom of the cup along with some tea leaves, and after stirring the remains three times, the pattern you're left with will tell you what's in store. In Asia, readers of tea leaves are just as respected as astrologers.

Bags. Tea bags were invented in America in the early 1800s, and were initially used to hold samples of teas brought from India. Today, 96% of all cups of tea served around the world were made using teabags.

Camellia sinensis. There are many different kinds of tea, but they are all derived from just one plant: *Camellia sinensis*. The color and variety of the tea (green, black, white, oolong) depends, however, on the way the leaves are treated.

Darjeeling. It's called the champagne of tea: a black tea, it is grown in the eponymous area of *Indian Bengal*. One of the world's most highly-prized tea varieties, teas are often falsely sold as coming from this area: for every 400 tons of tea sold under this name every year, only 100 tons actually comes from *Darjeeling*.

Elevenes. At 11 o'clock in the morning, to stay alert, in England it's common to take a break with a cup of tea and some cakes: *Elevenes*. Before dinner, however, you can take 'high tea': a kind of reinforced snack.

Food. You can't have a cup without something to go with it: from cookies and English cucumber sandwiches to seafood accompanied by green tea in Japan, by way of spicy Indian meat dishes, and all-chocolate desserts from Assam.

Gin. Mix gin and cold tea, flavor with little lemon rind, and you'll get a great summer cocktail. In the mid 1700s, in Great Britain, tea replaced gin as the drink of the masses, and became the nation's favorite beverage.

Hot or cold. Perfect when drunk steaming hot, tea is also one of the most thirst-quenching summer drinks when drunk cold, perhaps with ice, and possibly some lemon, lime or leaves of mint to add flavor.

India. After tourism, the cultivation of tea is India's second largest industry. And India tea is the variety most commonly drunk the world over, despite the fact that it originally came from China.

Joan Cusack. «Can I get you anything? Coffee? Tea? Me?» is one of cinema's best-known quotes. It's the famously cheeky line uttered by Joan Cusack to Harrison Ford in the classic film *Working Girl*.

Kettle. You won't find a kitchen in England without one: the kettle, used to boil the water for tea, can be either electric or heated up on the hob.

Loose tea. Loose tea is, for connoisseurs, the best way to taste tea: the quality of the tea leaves, which are often whole, and not broken up as in tea bags, is often higher, and retains more of their original flavor.

Mosquitoes. Tea leaves are a natural means of keeping mosquitoes away. All you have to do is use slightly damp leaves to add the scent of tea to the areas you want to keep insect-free.

Not just for drinking. Here are five good reasons for not giving up tea, even if you don't drink it - it helps to heal shaving cuts, eliminates bad odors when added to a foot bath, can be used to marinate meat, is a great fertilizer for roses, and is also good for cleaning floors.

Oolong. *Oolong* tea, a Chinese and Taiwanese tea with a fruity aroma, is also often called *Dragon's Tea*: these tea leaves, when put in teapot, often start to look like a dragon. The world's most expensive tea is an *oolong* tea: it's called *Tieguanyin*, and its leaves cost up to \$3,000 per kilo.

Party. *The Tea Party* is the American political movement which calls for less state intervention in key areas like the economy and healthcare. Its name harks back to the *Boston Tea Party*, an act of protest carried out in the 1700s when Americans rebelled against the British government, destroying cases of tea which had arrived from India.

Quotes. «Women are like tea bags. They do not know how strong they are until they get into hot water.» - Eleanor Roosevelt.

Ritz Carlton of Hong Kong. This is where the world's most expensive afternoon tea is drunk – you can spend up to \$8,888 dollars here. You can taste the world's best teas, finger food, fantastic cakes and enjoy the best view of the city.

Samovar. In Russia, the water for tea is boiled using a *samovar*. They were initially heated using coal, but these days usually run on electricity. They're traditional, common household items found in Russia, Iran and Turkey.

Theanine. The stimulant found in tea leaves is theanine, an antioxidant whose equivalent in coffee is caffeine. Tea, however, contains less caffeine than coffee: around half the amount.

UK. *The London Tea Auction* was an institution which lasted for 300 years. Tea was sold using the 'by the candle' system: bidding for lots went on until an inch of a candle had burnt away.

Vitamins. Tea is a natural antioxidant, and rich in vitamins: it contains vitamins B2, B1 and B6. Tea, however, is also rich in potassium, manganese, folic acid and calcium.

Water. Experts have always advised on the best kind of water for making tea. In early Chinese texts we can find suggestions that the best water should be taken from rivers and lakes.

X-rated. Amongst the many thousands of qualities that tea can boast, it has relaxing effects that can help improve your sex life. In particular, *Ashwagandha* tea is regarded as a stimulant to virility.

Yin Zhen or Silver Needle. This is the most highly prized of white teas. It comes from China, and takes its name from the leaves used to make it, which are harvested when they're young and still unfurled, and look like needles.

Zillah. The world's oldest gas pump is still going strong, and can be found in Zillah, in Washington State. It's known as the *Teapot Dome Service Station*, as it happens to look like a teapot.