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Chinese White Tea And Its Uses And Types

By Angela Sorros

Generally, Chinese white teas are considered to be the rare in China. They are rare in China since

most of the white tea is exported. Well, for long years, the Chinese tea drinkers have been hip to white tea's benefits, until recently it was virtually unknown outside of Asia. But, not anymore because today, everyone from chefs to medical researchers is praising the delicate flavor and purported health benefits of the Chinese white tea.

But what really is Chinese white tea?

Chinese white tea is sometimes considered as a subclass of green tea. It is slightly fermented with its body covered with fluffy white hair. It is usually harvested in the cold of earliest spring when tea bushes have just shed their protective scales on the tips of their branches to show to the world their fuzzy white down on the leaf buds.

These delicate buds are among the most carefully plucked and processed of all teas. The buds, as well as the first few unfurling leaves are not allowed to oxidize whatsoever. What happens is that immediately after picking, the buds are naturally dried in sunlight or inside under low heat in a very well-ventilated structure.

Unlike the oolong, black and pu-erh teas which undergo cellular oxidization to develop fragrance, color and flavor, most Chinese white teas are formulated with the absence of such processing step. This then results in a beverage whose taste is closest to fresh leaves from the tea bush.

Classifications of Chinese White Tea

Just like the other varieties of Chinese tea, white tea is divided into different types. To mention, there are the Silver Tip white tea and White peony tea as two of the most commonly well-known varieties. Let's take a look at each of them:

·Silver Tip White Tea - This variety of Chinese white tea is produced at Fuding and Zhenghe areas in Fujian province. Many tea drinkers consider this as a top grade white tea. In the processing, the single

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buds are plucked right when they fully develop and are ready to open. The beautifully acerose buds are covered with silvery hairs, hence the tea named "silver tip white tea". Also, this Chinese white tea is taken as "the beauty" in teas.

Many tea lovers also describe this tea as "white like cloud, green like dream, pure like snow, aromatic like orchid". And, as commonly noted, every bud stands in the cup upright just like bamboo shoots after a spring rain, when infusing.

·White Peony Tea - Also known as "Pai Mu Dan", this Chinese white tea variety is made from the buds and leaves that remain after the famous silver tip white tea has been harvested. This is sweet and mild, yet very full-bodied. Also, the cup color is darker and the aroma is bolder. Its natural sweetness clearly determines the close relationship to the silver tip white tea.

·Gong Mei - This is the third grade of Chinese white tea. The production of this tea uses leaves from the Xiao Bai or Small White tea trees.

·Shou Mei - This is a fruity furry Chinese white tea that is a chaotic blend of tips and upper leaf. According to some Chinese tea drinkers, Shou Mei has a stronger flavor than other white teas, similar to oolong. Also, it is the fourth grade of white tea and is plucked later than the White Peony, hence the tea may be darker in color.

Today, these varieties have reached America and many market researches predict that consumers will soon share their enthusiasm, turning the Chinese white tea into one of the hottest new food trends.

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All Types Of Chinese Teas Explained

By Angela Sorros

Probably you are familiar with the Chinese saying, "Firewood, rice, oil, salt, sauce, vinegar, and tea are the seven necessities to begin a day." Though tea is last on the list, we can still see how important the tea is for the Chinese.

There are actually thousand of Chinese tea varieties. These are usually classified by procedure,

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quality, and preparation methods and so on. However, if we will consider tea in terms of quality, there are actually eight classes of Chinese tea. These include green tea, oolong, black, red, white, yellow, flower, and compressed tea.

Now, let's take a look at these classes one by one.

Green Tea

Green tea is said to be the most natural type of Chinese tea. It is usually picked, naturally dried and fried briefly to get rid of its grassy smell. Unlike the other types, green tea skipped fermentation process.

According to some experts, green tea has the most medicinal value and the least caffeine content of all Chinese tea classes. The aroma of this type of Chinese type range from medium to high, while the flavor is usually light to medium. Today, about 50% of China's tea is green tea.

Oolong Tea

This type of Chinese tea is halfway between green tea and black tea in a sense that it is half fermented. Chinese also call it "Qing Cha" and its typical leaves are green in the middle and red on the edges as a result of the process to soften tea leaves.

Oolong tea leaves are basically withered and spread before undergoing a brief fermentation process. Then, it is fried, rolled and roasted.

Black Tea

The Chinese black tea produces full-bodied amber when brewed. Also, this type of Chinese tea undergoes withering, then left to ferment for a long while, and then roasted. The leaves of this variety become completely oxidized after processing.

Red Tea

As the name implies, this type of Chinese tea has red leaves and red tea color. This color is strongly highlighted during the fermentation process. It is also considered that red tea has low aroma and medium flavor and it is now divided into three subclasses: Kung Fu Red Tea, Ted Tea Bits, and Small Species Red Tea.

White Tea

This type of Chinese tea is sometimes considered as subclass of green tea. Perhaps it is for the fact that it is only withered and then roasted. Just like green tea, white tea escaped fermentation process. And, it has low caffeine content.

Yellow Tea

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Apparently, yellow tea has yellow leaves and yellow tea color. According to some experts, this type of Chinese tea is an uncommon class of Chinese tea. The flavor of yellow tea is usually mild and refreshing.

Flower Tea

Here is a unique type of Chinese tea - the Flower tea. It actually subdivides into Flower Tea and Scented Tea. Well, the Flower Tea is just based on a simple concept that dried flowers are used, without much processing, to make tea. The Scented Tea, on the other hand, uses green tea and red tea as base and mix with scent of flowers. Generally, this class has light to medium flavor and medium to strong aroma.

Compressed Tea

The final type of Chinese tea is the compressed tea. This class uses black tea as base tea. It is steamed and compressed into bricks, cakes, columns, and other shapes. Also, compressed tea has all the characteristics of black tea. It can be stored for years and decades.

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