



Tea



The Irresistible Aromas of Taiwan Tea

Taiwan has long been known among the countries of the East as the "land of tea," and in fact the island is the world's foremost producer of semi-fermented tea. Back a century and a half ago the island became famous for its "Formosa Oolong (Wulong) Tea"; its unique "White-tip Wulong" even caught the attention of Queen Victoria, who is said to have dubbed it "Oriental Beauty." In recent years new varieties such as Taiwan No. 12 (Jin Syuan) and Taiwan No. 13 (Jade), together with such innovations as pearl milk tea and tea cuisine, have become popular with tourists. For travelers who want to savor the tastes of Oriental tea, there is no better place than Taiwan.

Terrain and climate suit Taiwan perfectly to the production of tea. Everywhere, from north to south and even in alpine regions, you can see neatly ordered fields growing the fine tea which is so popular with tourists from Europe, America, Japan, Korea, China, and other areas. In this brochure we offer you—undoubtedly a tea-lover yourself—the information you need about Taiwan's special teas and about visiting the island's tourist tea plantations. While you are in Taiwan, don't forget to find these places, savor the rich flavors of Taiwan tea, and have yourself a "green" tour filled with the healthy aroma of tea.

The many permutations of Taiwan tea

Tea is an indispensable part of life in Taiwan, one of the "seven door openers: firewood, rice, cooking oil, salt, soy sauce, vinegar, and tea." Tea is more than a natural health beverage for drinking; it can also be added to food and made into local snacks such as tea-boiled eggs, and eaten. It can even be used to produce beauty products. In Taiwan you must not miss the uniquely Taiwanese, richly diverse culture of tea.

Drink tea for health

Drinking tea in Taiwan is more than a pleasant pastime; it can actually give your health index a boost! There are many advantages to drinking tea, and modern medical research has shown that the beverage contains many components that are beneficial to health. Catechins and antioxidants, for example, can reduce cholesterol in the blood, and tea caffeine can moderately stimulate the brain and alleviate exhaustion. Tea also contains numerous minerals, including potassium, fluorine,

and manganese, along with trace elements, vitamins, and other elements needed by the body.

Besides all this, as a gourmet you will also want to experience Taiwan's unique tea cuisine. Tea can eliminate oiliness, eradicate gamey flavors, refresh the taste buds, and intensify tastes, and so makes a fine additive to food. Different varieties of tea have different characteristics, and they have a variety of effects on color, aroma, and flavor. The addition of tea leaves to food, therefore, is extremely popular among foreign visitors who emphasize health.

Taiwan's tea culture, in fact, is greatly beneficial to the health of mind and body. While you're in Taiwan, don't forget to indulge in the island's tea and tea cuisine—the best in the world!

A multitude of tea products

In addition to drinking tea and eating tea cuisine, you can also choose other tea products to take home as gifts that will enchant your friends. Yes indeed, tea leaves are good for more than just making a beverage. They can be made into tea jelly, fruit tea, tea candy, and other items, and their essence can be extracted to produce such things as tea soap, tea toothpaste, and tea bath oil. They can even be used to make alcoholic cocktails.



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Travel Information

- Taoyuan International Airport Tourist Service Center
Tel: 886-3-398-2194, 886-3-398-3341
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E-mail: cks@tbrc.gov.tw
- Tainan Travel Section
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- Kaohsiung International Airport Tourist Service Center
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Tel: 886-2-2717-3737
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E-mail: tsck@tbrc.gov.tw
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Savoring the taste of Taiwan tea

To understand Taiwan tea, it might be advisable to start with its familiar categorization. In terms of fermentation the categories are unfermented, semi-fermented, and fully fermented. The semi-fermented Oolong (Wulong) tea has the mild fragrance of green tea plus the rich taste of black tea, making it Taiwan's most unique tea. Travel around Taiwan and everywhere you will see Wunshan Pouchong (baojhong) tea, White-tipped Oolong tea, Dongding Oolong tea, and Alpine Oolong tea, all belonging to this variety. Taiwan in fact has many varieties of tea with special characteristics, and they have many different names. Below we will introduce some of these special teas to you, so that you can enjoy them more fully in your travels around the island.

Varieties and characteristics

Green tea

Green tea falls in the unfermented category, and drinking it as a cancer-preventative has become a global trend. The most important area in all of Taiwan for the growing of this tea is Sansia in Taipei County, where the Longjing (dragon well) and Biluochun (green spiral) types are especially popular. Green tea has been Taiwan's biggest tea export from 1945 up to the present.

Tieguanyin tea

Tieguanyin (Iron Guanyin, said to be named for the metal goddess-shaped container in which it was packed) is a semi-fermented tea. It is more heavily fermented than Dongding Wulong and is produced by a process similar to that used to make the semi-spherical Baojhong, but repeated roasting and rolling fills it with an especially roasty flavor that leaves the tea with a rich taste even after the same pot of leaves has been steeped several times. The best Tieguanyin is grown in the Muzha district of Taipei and in the Shihmen area. Its liquor is amber in color and its roasty aroma carries hints of dried fruit. Its taste is full, smooth, and sweet, with a touch of bitterness.

Semi-spherical Baojhong

Semi-spherical Baojhong, also known as Dongding or Dongding Wulong, is a semi-fermented tea that is given its shape by press-rolling in a cloth bag. This unique Taiwan tea is equally excellent in aroma and flavor. It originated in the mountain areas at elevations of 500-800 meters near the Sitou Scenic Area; in recent years, its cultivation has spread to Mingjian, Jhushan, and other townships in Nantou County as well as other places around the island. Each producing area has its own name for this tea, such as Nantou County's Dongding Wulong tea and Songbo Changqing tea, and Chiayi County's Alishan Jhulu tea. The leaves are dark green in color and the liquor is golden yellow; the aroma is rich, and the taste is sweet and full. After drinking this tea, you will enjoy the aftertaste for a long time.

White-tip Wulong (Oolong) tea

White-tip Wulong is a semi-fermented variety that is more heavily fermented than tieguanyin; this is the most famous of Taiwan's special teas, and it is produced only on the island. It is cultivated in Hsinchu County's Beipu and Emei, and neighboring Miaoli County's Touwu and Toufen. Smaller green leaf-hoppers suck the juice from young and tender leaves and tips of the Cingsin Dapang variety, producing the white tips for which the tea is named, and it is these leaves and tips that are used to produce it. This tea, also known as Oriental Beauty, has thick hairs and is a pretty white, green, yellow, brown, and red in color. The amber liquor has a mellow, full taste and the aroma of ripe fruit or honey.

Alpine tea

The Wulong tea grown at altitudes above 1,000 meters is called alpine tea and is produced mainly in newly developed plantations in Chiayi, Yunlin, and Nantou counties. Fog envelops the high mountain areas in the early morning and late afternoon, and ultraviolet rays are strong here, reducing catechins and other elements that produce a bitter taste while increasing L-theanine and soluble nitrogen to produce a sweeter taste. The liquor is honey green with a hint of yellow, the taste is sweet and smooth, and the aroma is light and delicate.

Black tea

The fully fermented Assam black tea produced in the area of Sun Moon Lake in the central part of Taiwan is known around the world, especially for its aroma. The liquor is bright red in color, and it can be drunk with milk or lemon to vary its taste. The relatively costly hand-picked tea leaves are processed into strip shapes, while machine-picked tea is mostly shredded and used for making tea bags or canned tea.

Choosing the right tea for you

In Taiwan, buying tea is the easiest thing in the world, with tea booths in all major department stores, shopping centers, and large grocery stores. In Taipei, there are lots of specialty tea shops on and around Hengyang Road and Chongqing South Road. Or you can go to a tourist tea plantation and buy direct from the producer. Taiwan tea generally sells for around NT\$1,000 per catty (half a kilogram), but prices vary widely according to grade. For tea sets and other ceramic items, you can find just about anything you could possibly want in the island's pottery capital of Yingge in Taipei County.

Tea-purchasing rules

If you want to buy some tea to take home but don't know how to choose the right kind, you can use the product code to check the production process and other related information, including quality, on specific packages of tea. And you can use the following principles in buying your tea:

Appearance: Check out what the leaves look like. They should be full in form and completely dried, and should not contain too many stems or other extraneous matter. Also check out whether the shape of the processed leaves is fixed; the leaves of Wunshan Baojhong, for example, are strip-shaped, while Dongding tea is semi-spherical and White-tipped Wulong (Oriental Beauty) has naturally curled leaves.

Color: Leaves that are glossy and fresh are the best. Wunshan Baojhong and Dongding Wulong leaves are dark green, the Tieguanyin of Muzha is dark brown, and White-tipped Wulong has five colors mixed.

Aroma: Smell the aroma of the unsteeped leaves. Wunshan Baojhong has a flowery smell, the Tieguanyin of Muzha has the odor of dried fruit, and Dongding Wulong has a roasted smell. Also check to see if there is any oily or other unpleasant odor.

Liquor: The color of the liquor varies with the extent of fermentation and the degree of roasting, but it must not be cloudy or gray. It must be clear and light in color.

Flavor: The liquor should be sweet, full-bodied, and rich. The best tea leaves a long-lasting sweet and mellow taste in the throat.

How to brew tea

The traditional tea-brewing method (Do not use green tea)

1. Warming the pot and cups: Tea pot and cups are warmed with hot water.
2. Placing tea in the pot: Leaves are placed in the tea holder and carefully dumped into the pot.
3. Warming and rinsing: Boiling water is poured over the leaves in the pot; the foam is scraped off the top with a tea spoon, and the water is poured out.
4. Steeping: More hot water is poured into the pot; the pot is covered with a lid, and the tea is steeped for about one minute.
5. Pouring the tea: The tea liquor is poured into the brewing tray and from there into the fragrance cup.
6. Smelling the tea: The aroma from the surface of the fragrance cup is savored; the tea is poured into the tasting cup, and the aroma from the bottom of the fragrance cup is smelled.
7. Tasting the tea: The tea in the tasting cup is sampled.

Simplified brewing

You can take your tea from a convenient covered cup or glass by placing the tea leaves directly inside and pouring a proper amount of hot water over them.





Taiwan tea-country tour

If you are a true tea connoisseur and want to find out just how special Taiwan-grown tea really is, then go to a tea-producing area and have yourself a tour of tea country. Here, we introduce a number of Taiwan's main tea-growing areas for your consideration:

Muzha tourist tea plantations, Taipei City

The tourist tea plantations of Muzha—the first such in Taiwan—are the perfect place for drinking tea and watching the lights of Taipei at night. To get to this area, which is known for its Tieguanyin tea, just take the winding road upward to a charming area of tea plantations, farm homes and tea houses. Among the trails available for hiking here is the Historic Tea Trail which farmers used to transport tea down the mountain in early days. Another of the paths, the Zhanghu Trail, takes you through luxuriantly green tea fields. After hiking one of the trails, you can rest and relax in a local tea house. Another way to enjoy a beautiful sight of the verdant tea fields here is to get a bird's-eye view from the new Maokong cable car.

The unique tea houses of Jioufen, Taipei County

In the old days, the northern Taiwan town of Jioufen was a gold-mining settlement known as "Little Shanghai" for its scintillating night life. After the gold ran out Jioufen almost became a ghost town, but a famous movie—"City of Sadness"—filmed there brought new life through tourism and led to the town's development into an artists' colony bustling with creativity.

In Jioufen you are sure to be deeply impressed by the beautiful scenes of mountains and sea, and by the historic structures built on the steep mountain slope. You will also be attracted to the many tea houses and shops of all kinds that you will find here, rustic establishments that reflect local characteristics and provide relaxation among enchanting surroundings. As you savor your tea you will be struck by the richly cultural old-timey atmosphere, and by the tasty tea-leaf pastries that are made using Oriental Beauty, Jin Syuan, and flower tea.

The tea plantations of Beipu and Emei, Hsinchu County

This is where Oriental Beauty, the name of which legend attributes to Queen Victoria, is grown. Beipu and Emai produce this famous tea, also known as White-tip Wulong and Pengfong. Superfine Oriental Beauty has the aroma of honey and ripe fruit; it is harvested only once a year, so its quantity is small. In addition to enjoying fine tea, this is where you can also savor the romance of Hakka culture.

Special teas of different growing areas in Taiwan



Dongding Wulong tea of Lugu, Nantou County

Located in mid-elevation mountains, Lugu has tranquil forested mountain scenery and a comfortably cool climate. The nearby Sitou Forest Recreation Area is one of the most popular tourist destinations in central Taiwan. The land around Lugu is also home to the famous moso bamboo, whose fresh and dried shoots are known far and near.

The Dongding Wulong tea of Lugu benefits from a mountain-surrounded topography that is frequently shrouded in mist, superior conditions which nurture tea that is very high in catechins. The resulting high-quality leaves are processed by press-rolling in cloth bags and special roasting skills, producing tea that has a mild fragrance and brews a clear, golden yellow liquor. Dongding Wulong leaves a strong and lasting aftertaste, and the same batch of leaves can be used to steep several pots of tea. This is the variety most often sought by tea lovers from Taiwan and overseas.

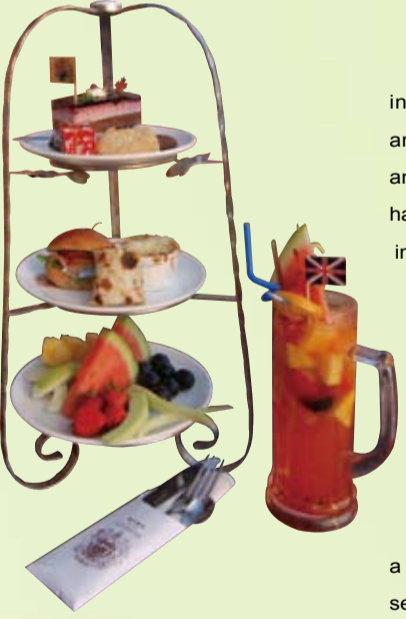
The black tea of Yuchih, Nantou County

Sun Moon Lake is the largest lake in Taiwan, its name derived from the relatively round (like a sun) eastern part and long, curved (like a crescent moon) western part. Undulating mountain peaks surround the lake and are reflected in its surface, making the area a beautiful and enchanting fairyland that is central Taiwan's most popular tourist destination. It is also home to the indigenous Thao tribe, who believe that the spirits of their ancestors reside on tiny Lalu Island in the center of the lake.

But the Sun Moon Lake area is known for more than its spectacular scenery; it is also the producer of the largest amount, and highest quality, of black tea in Taiwan. The varieties grown here include Taiwan No. 18 and Assam, which feature a regular-shaped leaf and a lovely bright-red liquor with the fragrance of caramel.

Alishan tourist tea plantations, Chiayi County

On your way through the tea plantations of Alishan you will pass through climate changes that give rise to tropical, temperate, and frigid-zone forests. You will have access to awesome valley landscapes, groups of waterfalls, spectacular sunrises over seas of clouds, and plants unique to Taiwan. Here you can enjoy tea-country scenery and refreshing forest phytoncides at the same time. The famous Alishan Jhulu tea, one of Taiwan's top-10 varieties, is grown in the area of Shihjhuo in Jhuci Township.



Takao British Consulate, Kaohsiung English afternoon tea

The Takao British Consulate in Kaohsiung was built in 1865 as the first large foreign building in Taiwan. The architecture is Victorian in style, with eye-catching red brick and arched corridors. The details express a sense of esthetic harmony. From this location, look to the east and you will have impressive views of the world's sixth-largest harbor; to the west you can watch ships sailing out to sea; and to the south you can observe Cijin Lighthouse in the distance.

This building, rich in unique character, is a second-grade national historic site, and it offers an irresistible opportunity to enjoy a traditional English afternoon tea with delicious low-fat, low-calorie snacks. If you are here at night, have a taste of English evening tea. The tea here offers a striking contrast with the Chinese-style tea and tea snacks served at Kaohsiung's Confucius Temple, providing yet another choice for tea lovers.

Wuhe tourist tea plantations, Hualien

Hualien is a popular destination for tourists. Its tea farms are concentrated in the area of Wuhe Village, Rueisuei Township, where tea fields alternate with groves of betel-nut trees on the river terraces. The tourist tea plantations here are located at an elevation of 250 meters on the Rueisuei-Wuhe Plateau, where the air is clean and fresh and the scenery is alluring. The fame of the Wuhe tea grown here has spread far and wide, and it and its products are filled with rich local flavor: Misiang black tea and green tea, along with tea pastries, tea moon cakes, tea chocolates, and other delicacies made and sold directly by the local production and marketing group.

Luye tourist tea plantations, Taitung County

The tourist tea plantations on Luye Plateau are best known for their Fulu tea. At harvest time here you can see indigenous tribesmen picking the tea, presenting a sight different the women who generally do the job in other places. The plateau offers expansive views of the surrounding countryside, with impressive sights of guava orchards, the East Rift Valley, and orderly farm fields on the river terraces. This high plateau is also the takeoff point for paragliders and hang gliders, which can frequently be seen drifting slowly down to the river bottoms far below.

Tea houses around Taiwan

- Cha for Tea**
(branches throughout Taiwan)
Address: 152 FuXing N. Rd., Taipei
Tel: 886-2-2719-9900
- Moonlight Tea House**
Address: 80 Wenzhou St., Taipei
Tel: 886-2-8369-3963
- Hui Liu**
Address: 9 YongKang St., Lane 31, Taipei
Tel: 886-2-2392-6707
- King Ping Tea**
Address: 2 ZhongShan N. Rd., Sec. 7, Lane 124, Taipei
Tel: 886-2-2871-7811
- Wang De Chuan**
Address: 12 ChangChun Rd., Taipei
Tel: 886-2-2561-5738
- Is Tea Restaurant**
Address: 15 MinSheng E. Rd., Sec. 3, Lane 113, Alley 6
Tel: 86-2-2717-1455
- Chao Chou Tea Arts**
Address: 25 TaiShun St., Lane 50, Taipei
Tel: 886-2-2365-6761
- Shann Garden Teahouse**
Address: 34 YouYa Rd., Beitou District, Taipei
Tel: 886-2-2896-5700
- Suiyuanju**
Address: 123 DaAn Rd., Sec. 1, Taipei
Tel: 886-2-2781-8055
- Yao Yue Teahouse**
Address: 6 ZhihNan Rd., Sec. 3, Lane 40, Wenshan District, Taipei
Tel: 886-2-2939-9025
- Jioufen Teahouse**
Address: 142 Jishan St., Jioufen, Taipei County
Tel: 886-2-2497-6487
- Her-Huan Tea Banquet Restaurant**
Address: 5-1 Shueidi Village, Pinglin, Taipei County
Tel: 886-2-2665-6424
- Chu Lung Villa**
Address: 85 Yanti Rd., Wulai, Taipei County
Tel: 886-2-2661-6333
- Der Yeh Char Chy**
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Tel: 886-2-2396-8036
- Tien-yuan Tea House**
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Tel: 886-3-341-2155
- Flowing Tea House**
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Tel: 886-3-471-8116
- Sui Yuan Ceramic Co.**
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Tel: 886-3-492-2723
- Her Yuan Tea House**
Address: 4F, 1 Gongye 2nd Rd., Hsinchu Science Park, Hsinchu
Tel: 886-3-666-2706
- Chun-shui Tang Cultural Tea House**
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Address: 12 Chaoma 3rd St., Taichung City (main store)
Tel: 886-4-2254-9779
- Keng Tu Yuan**
Address: 109 Shihjeng Rd., Taichung
Tel: 886-4-2251-8388
- Wu Wei Tsao Tang**
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- Snake Kiln Teahouse**
Address: 41 Dingkan Village, Shueili Township, Nantou County
Tel: 886-49-2770-967
- Hanlin Tea Room**
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Address: 313 Minzu Rd., Sec. 2, Tainan (Chihkan store)
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