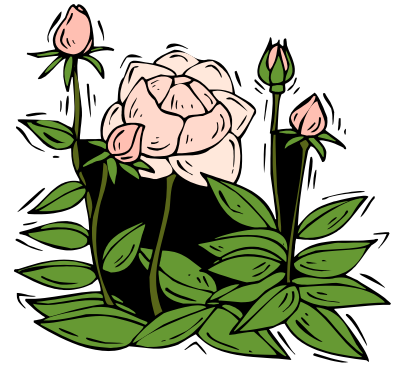


WORDS

- **absorb** = take in
- **bud** = a tightly rolled up flower or leaf before it opens
- **cause** =lead to
- **century** =a hundred years
- **common** =well-known
- **crush** = to break something into many small pieces
- **finally** = in the end
- **harvest** = to bring in products from the field or from trees
- **hazelnut** =the nut of a hazel tree
- **height** =how high something is
- **illness** = disease
- **leathery** = made out of leather
- **oven** = a metal box with a door in front in which you can cook food
- **oxygen** = gas that is in the air and that we need to breathe
- **plantation** = a large area of land on which tea, coffee etc.. is grown
- **pluck** = to pull something quickly
- **pointed** = sharp
- **popular** = liked by a lot of people
- **pour** =to make water flow out of a container or pot
- **prevent** = to stop something from happening
- **process** = to make goods or food so that they can be sold
- **scientist** =a person who is trained in science
- **sea level** =the average height of the sea; it is used to calculate how high mountains and other places are
- **seed** = a small hard object of a plant from which a new plant can grow
- **shelf - shelves** = a long flat board used to lay something on
- **sleeplessness** = if you cannot sleep
- **spread** =to open out
- **steamer** = a container used to cook food in the gas made by hot water
- **substance** =material
- **temperate** = not too hot and not too cold
- **throughout** = in the whole, in all of

Tea is one of the most **popular** drinks in the world. You make it by **pouring** hot water over the dried leaves of a tea plant. For **centuries** people **believed** that teas could **cure illnesses**, they used it as medicine. Today **scientists** know that tea **contains** chemicals that **prevent** cells from dying. Most teas have caffeine in them, a **substance** that makes you feel more active. Some people have problems drinking tea because it can **cause sleeplessness**.

**TEA PLANT**

The tea plant grows best in tropical and **temperate** places where rain falls **throughout** the year. Tea can be grown from **sea level** to about 2,000 metres, but the best quality grows in higher regions.

Tea comes from the leaves and **buds** of tea plants. Wild plants can be up to 9 metres high but on tea **plantations** they are cut back to a bush of about a metre in **height** so that workers can **pluck** the leaves easily.



The plant produces **pointed, leathery** dark leaves, small white flowers and **seeds** that look like **hazelnuts**. It takes a plant three to five years before is ready for **plucking**.

A **pluck**er can **harvest** about 20 kg of tea a day. On large tea **plantations** the leaves are **harvested** by machines, but the quality of tea is higher when the leaves are hand-plucked.

TYPES OF TEA

The most **common** types of tea are black and green tea. They come from the same plant but are **processed** differently.

Workers take the leaves and **spread** them out on **shelves** where they can dry. Next, they are rolled and broken into pieces and put into a room where they **absorb oxygen**. Chemical reactions change the taste and character of the tea. **Finally**, the leaves are dried with hot air until they turn brownish-black. Most black tea comes from Sri Lanka, Indonesia and eastern Africa.

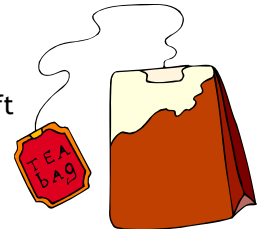
To make green tea, workers put the freshly picked leaves into a **steamer**, which keeps them green. Then they are **crushed** and dried in **ovens**. Japan is the biggest producers of green tea .

WORDS

- **A.D.** =anno Domini = after the birth of Christ
- **although** =while
- **American Revolutionary War** = war in which British colonies in America became independent
- **beverage** = a hot or cold drink
- **brew** = to get the taste into the hot water
- **century** = a hundred years
- **Dutch** = a person from the Netherlands
- **enjoy** = like
- **especially** =above all
- **flavour** = the special taste of something
- **harbour** = place where ships stay to load and unload their goods
- **in the course of time**= over the centuries
- **instead** =if you do something or want something to replace something else
- **lemon** = a fruit with a hard yellow skin and a sour juice
- **originally** = at first
- **overseas** = to a country that is across the ocean
- **place** =put
- **produce** = make
- **rule** =government
- **soak** = to leave something in water for some time
- **spread** =to expand from one place to another
- **tax** = money that you must pay to the government
- **trader** = a person who buys and sells things

Tea can be bought in many forms - leaves, powder or tea bags. Some of them are added with **flavours**, like vanilla, orange or **lemon**. **Although** most people drink their tea hot, many **enjoy** iced tea, **especially** during the summer months.

Black tea is **brewed** by pouring water over a tea-spoon of tea. The tea should **soak** for three to five minutes before you drink it. Green tea should be left in water longer. **Instead** of putting tea leaves into a pot people often put tea bags into a cup.

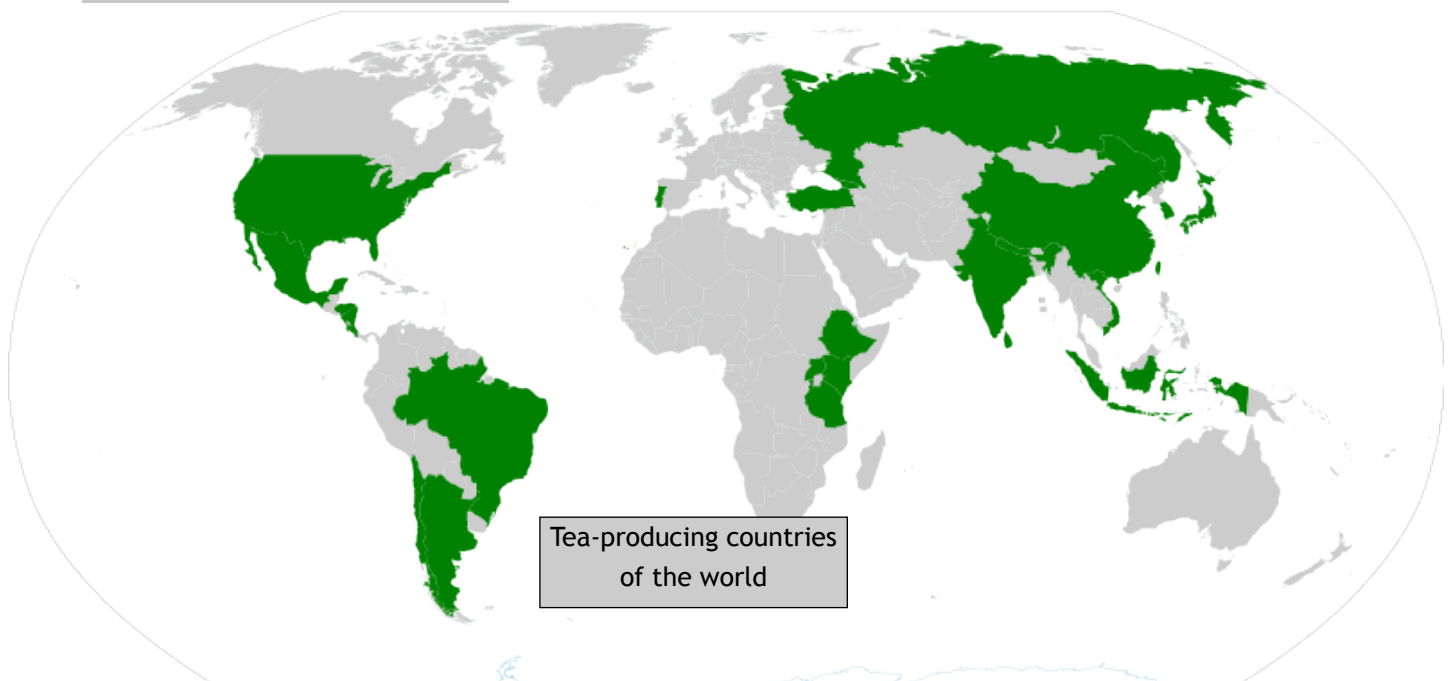
**HISTORY**

People first drank tea in China about 5000 years ago. **Originally** it was used as a medicine, then as a daily drink. It **spread** to Japan in the 3rd **century A.D.** **Dutch** and Portuguese **traders** brought tea from eastern Asia to Europe in the 1600s.

In 1657 the **beverage** was sold for the first time in coffee houses in Great Britain. When the English started a tradition of tea drinking in the afternoon it became England's national drink. In the 17th and 18th **centuries** tea **spread** to British colonies **overseas**.

In 1767 Great Britain **placed** a **tax** on tea imported by American colonists. During the Boston Tea Party of 1773 they were so angry that they threw a ship full of British tea into the **harbour** to protest British **rule**. Two years later the **American Revolutionary War** started.

Today about 3.3 million tons of tea are produced. India, with its famous tea growing regions like Darjeeling and Assam, and China **produce** about half of the world's tea. It also grows in many other parts of Asia, **especially** in Sri Lanka and Indonesia. **In the course of time** growing tea has **spread** to countries in Eastern Europe, Africa and South America .



Tea-producing countries of the world