



In this month's **Spotlight on...** section we visit the region of one of my favorite teas - Assam, India. We take a look at two of the antioxidant compounds that are found in black tea in the **Tea & Health** section. To help keep you cool and refreshed this summer we've extended the special on teas that are great iced, so be sure to check out the **July's Special Offers** section below. We continue to strive to bring you the latest information about tea each month and we look forward to your comments and suggestions.

Spotlight on...Teas of Assam

Assam is a tea-producing region in northeastern India and is the largest producer of tea in the world. The history of mass tea production in Assam is fairly recent, only dating to the 1830's; however, Assam is home to the indigenous tea plants of the large-leaf varietal *Camellia sinensis* var. *assamica*. These plants were only "discovered" in the early 1800's by British botanist Charles Bruce, but the native peoples had been using the leaves for centuries to make a strong beverage that would give them energy.



India & Assam Region

Assam is a lush, jungle-like, low-lying area at the foothills of the Himalayas that is dominated by wide plains, the Brahmaputra and Barak river valleys, and some mountainous terrain. The tea plants thrive in this environment and there are four harvest seasons that run from March through November. Assam's main focus is black tea, but a very limited supply of white tea is also produced.

In the past, Assam generally did not have a reputation for producing high quality tea; however, within recent decades many of the tea gardens began to improve their agricultural and manufacturing methods to produce teas that could compete with other high quality teas and command higher prices. Assam produces wonderful orthodox teas, but more than 90% of the tea produced is CTC (crush, tear, curl). During orthodox tea production, care is taken to preserve the unique flavors and characteristics of the tea leaves, while the focus of CTC tea production is to quickly process as many tea leaves as possible. CTC is mainly consumed by the people of India, especially as spicy Masala Chai, but is also put into teabags. The primary focus of orthodox teas and CTC teas can be viewed as quality versus quantity.

Assam teas are dark, full-bodied, strong and flavorful with a

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Upcoming Events



Visit our booth at the following shows:

Sunday 7/24

Hicksville Summer Street Fair

Intersection of Jerusalem Ave,
West John St. & Broadway,
Hicksville
11:00am - 6:00pm

Friday 8/5 - Sunday 8/7

Sayville Summerfest

Gillette Park
Gillette Ave. & Main St., Sayville
Fri 8/5 5:00pm - 9:00pm
Sat 8/6 10:00am - 9:00pm
Sun 8/7 10:00am - 5:00pm
*our booth will be near the white house in the park

***If you plan to pick up any specific teas/items at any of our shows, please call or e-mail us at least one day ahead.

Can't make an upcoming show or

malty character. Because of the way they are produced, CTC teas infuse quicker and stronger, creating a darker, more robust, more astringent tea that is higher in caffeine. Assams make an excellent morning cup and are usually one of the base teas in the traditional breakfast blends. Better quality Assams produced by orthodox methods can be consumed plain, but milk and sugar or honey is usually added. CTC Assams are almost always consumed with milk and sugar or honey.

Join us next month as we continue our exploration of India in the Darjeeling region....

Tea & Health: Black Tea Polyphenols

Many of us think that green tea is the healthiest of all the teas, or perhaps the *only* healthy tea. The main reason for this has been the *only* primary focus on studying the components of green tea and their beneficial effects on the human body. Unfortunately, this provides a rather incomplete account, as tea is an extremely diverse and complex beverage.

One example of tea's complexity involves the group of polyphenols known as catechins, of which EGCG (epigallocatechin gallate) is just one type. EGCG has been identified as a key to tea's potential health benefits because of its antioxidant capabilities, and green tea contains higher levels of it than black tea. During the stage of processing when tea leaves are oxidized EGCG and the other catechins are partially transformed into theaflavins and thearubigins, which belong to another group of polyphenols known as catechol tannins. These "black tea" polyphenols are very complex and difficult to study, and are the compounds responsible for imparting the color, body and flavors typical of black tea. Although they have yet to be widely studied, they are believed to have powerful antioxidant properties and similar potential health benefits as catechins.

As studies are conducted, I will be sure to bring you the latest results.



*Yours in tea,
Kristine Henderson
The Pleasures of Tea*

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or contact us for delivery options.

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just want to try some
different teas?
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July's Special Offers:

- **July11** - save 10% on teas in the India-Assam Region category.
- **Icedtea** - celebrate National Iced Tea month and save 10% on teas in the Iced Teas category.
- **Ship2011** - free shipping on any order subtotal of \$80 or more.

Please mention one of the above codes when placing your order by phone or input it at checkout in our online shop www.pleasuresoftea.com.

Offer Expires: July 31, 2011

Only one coupon code may be used per order. Not to be combined with any other offers.