



In this month's **Spotlight on...** section we move on to visit the second of the five traditional tea-growing countries - Japan. In the **Tea & Health** section we take a look at theanine, an important amino acid, and the affects it has on our bodies. 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 Japan

The earliest Japanese reference to tea appears in records from 814 AD. It is believed that tea was first brought to Japan from China by Buddhist monks. In 1191 a Japanese Zen Buddhist monk, Eisai, brought tea seeds back to Japan from his travels throughout China. He shared the seeds with a friend, who planted them in the Uji Region outside of Kyoto.

The historical birthplace of tea and tea culture in Japan is centered in Uji, which retains its prestige, even though it is no longer a major tea producer. Today the majority of tea production occurs in four Prefectures in the southernmost third of this island nation: Shizuoka; Kagoshima; Mie; and Fukuoka. Japan's tea production is highly mechanized and every part of the plant is utilized.

Japan produces mainly green tea, which differ from Chinese green tea in that they are steamed instead of pan-fired. The steaming process retains the vibrant green color and more of the vegetal character of the tea leaves. The teas have a savory note, known as umami, and are mainly described as vegetal, spinachy, or seaweedy. There are many different styles of Japanese tea, all of which can be assigned to one of two categories: full sun grown or shade grown.

Approximately eighty percent of the tea produced in Japan is sencha, a full sun grown tea. Other full sun grown teas include shinchu (limited quantity spring tea), bancha (common tea made from coarser, more mature leaves), kukicha (twig tea made from sencha stems), hojicha (roasted bancha leaves), genmaicha (brown rice tea), and tamaryokucha (curly green tea). Shade grown teas require more labor to produce and, therefore, are more expensive. Shade grown teas include gyokuro (shade grown for 90 days prior to harvesting), karigane (gyokuro stems), matcha (powdered green tea), and kabusecha (shade grown for two weeks prior to harvesting).

Matcha is the tea used in the Japanese Tea Ceremony,

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Upcoming Events



Visit our booth at the following shows:

Sunday 5/29

Islip Street Festival

Main Street, Islip

*our booth will be near Locust Ave

11:00am - 6:00pm

Saturday 6/4

Deborah Hospital Craft Fair/Duck Race

Babylon Town Hall

200 Sunrise Hwy, Lindenhurst

10:00am - 5:00pm

Sunday 6/5

Smithtown Festival Day

Main Street, Smithtown

*our booth will be near the Waldbaums Shopping Center

9:00am - 5:00pm

***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.

Are you new to loose tea or just want to try some different teas?

also known as Chado "The Way of Tea". It is a "whipped" tea and is a remnant of the form of tea that was produced prior to the current loose leaf form of tea that began a few hundred years ago. The ceremony focuses on simplicity, harmony, and respect and requires a lifetime of study to learn the over 150 individual steps. During the ceremony, a small amount of tea is put in a matcha bowl, water is added, and then a bamboo whisk is used to mix the tea.

Join us next month as we continue our journey in Taiwan....

Tea & Health: Theanine

Theanine, also known as L-theanine, is an amino acid that is uniquely present in the tea plant *Camellia sinensis*. It is one of the main components of tea that is responsible for tea's rich flavor, also known as umami. Theanine has been shown to reduce stress and enhance relaxation by increasing production of alpha brain waves. A study conducted in 2007 determined that theanine works in conjunction with the caffeine that is present in tea to increase the brain's ability to concentrate, while also reducing the negative effects of the caffeine. Other studies have shown links between theanine and reduction of cholesterol, normalization of high blood pressure, and increase in immune function.

Theanine is present in higher amounts in young tea leaves and buds. Shorter steeping times maximize umami and the proportion of theanine content within the infusion. This is one of the reasons that Japanese teas require a relatively short steep time, which also reduces the bitterness of the caffeine and the astringency of the polyphenols.



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

Then host your own private tea-tasting!

Invite your family and friends for a relaxing, fun and informative afternoon or evening.

Select from our menu of over 170 teas and herbal infusions from around the world. We carry the tried and true favorites, as well as some rare and unique teas.

Please contact us for pricing or to schedule a date.

631-278-5755

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Proud Member



Contact Info

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May's Special Offers:

- **May11** - save 10% on teas in the Japanese Green 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: May 31, 2011

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