



Wilson's
Coffee & Tea

Green Tea 101

Green tea, like all true teas, comes from the *Camellia sinensis* plant. While most green teas come from China or Japan, green tea is also produced in many other countries and can be made anywhere tea is grown.

The first step in processing green tea is steaming. Immediately after the leaves are plucked, they are placed in a metal pan over a hot flame. They become soft and pliable, and the heat destroys the enzymes that cause fermentation in black teas. The leaves are then rolled, usually by hand and on heated trays. The heat reduces the moisture content in the leaves. After rolling, the leaves are sorted and packed for shipment.

Green tea should be stored in an airtight container away from heat, moisture, and light. Like other teas, it will stay fresh for six months to a year if stored properly. Darker colored or more tightly rolled teas will stay fresh longer than lighter colored or more loosely rolled teas.

Brewing green tea is easy. Always start with fresh, cold water and high quality tea. Heat the water to just below a boil (boiled water tastes flat). Green tea tastes best with water that is between 180 and 200° F. If your water is too cool or too hot, your tea may be bitter. Place the tea leaves in the infuser or teapot. Use about one teaspoon of tea for every 6 oz. of water. Pour the water over the leaves. Don't oversteep your tea! Oversteeped tea will taste bitter. While black teas should brew for 3–5 minutes, green teas are often ready in only 2–3 minutes. Look at the leaves—your tea is ready when the leaves have unfolded and when most of them have dropped to the bottom of the pot.

There are many different green teas. Green teas are named for the rolling style used in their preparation, for their particular flavor, for the region in which they were grown, or for their grade or quality level. Young Hyson is a long, twisted leaf tea. Gunpowder teas are rolled into tight pellets. Genmaicha is a combination of green tea and toasted rice. Hojicha is made from roasted tea leaves. Sencha is the name given to everyday tea in Japan. High quality senchas are sometimes saved for special occasions. Dragonwell or Lung Ching is a long, flat leaf from a specific area in China.

Green tea contains caffeine, but much less than is found in coffee or chocolate. The level of caffeine in green tea is also usually lower than that found in black or oolong teas. Green tea contains antioxidants, including many different catechins and flavonoids. Green tea contains fluoride—usually more than found in fluoridated tap water. Green tea contains Vitamin C and Vitamin E. Studies have been done or are being done that examine the effectiveness of green tea in preventing many different types of cancer. There is also research that looks at the ability of green tea to lower cholesterol levels and stress in preventing heart disease. Other studies look at green tea's antibacterial effects, antiviral activity, and ability to stimulate the immune system.

Green tea is delicious—we recommend drinking it because it tastes good!