

TPOT Newsletter

TPOT

The Pleasures of Tea

Bringing together family & friends with a cup of tea

March 2009
Volume 2 Issue 3



This issue of the TPOT Newsletter reviews the definition of tea and discusses the levels of caffeine in tea. Do you have a tea question that you need answered? If so, e-mail it to customerservice@pleasuresoftea.com and it will be covered in a future newsletter. Looking forward to hearing from you!

Yours in tea...Kristine

Spotlight on...

I'd like to review the definition of tea because it will provide background for this month's **Tea & Health** topic: Tea and Caffeine. We use the word "tea" to refer to any beverage that is created by pouring hot water over leaves or teabags. For example, we have black tea, green tea, chamomile "tea", peppermint "tea", and so on. In general, using this term greatly simplifies matters, but it is technically not accurate terminology. True teas all come from the same plant - *Camellia sinensis*. The *Camellia sinensis* plant is a tree in its natural form, i.e. when left to grow wild. However, in tea gardens throughout the world the *Camellia sinensis* plant has been cultivated into a bush for easier plucking of its leaves and buds (new, unopened leaf). It is these leaves and buds that become the many varieties of the tea that we enjoy. There are thousands of varieties of tea, all of which are created by variations in how the leaves and buds of the *Camellia sinensis* plant are processed. Based on the processing method, the resulting tea will fall into one of the following categories: black; oolong; yellow; green; white; or pu'erh.



All other "teas", those not made from the *Camellia sinensis* plant, are actually classified as herbal infusions or tisanes. Tisanes can be made from herbs, flowers, fruits, spices, roots, etc. and can be combined in infinite combinations. These ingredients can also be blended with true teas to make a loose tea blend that is truly spectacular to look at and enjoy in the aroma and flavor of the infusion. Herbal infusions are especially popular as nighttime "teas" because they are naturally caffeine-free (except for maté), whereas all true teas naturally contain caffeine.

Tea & Health

This is the first installment of a three-part series on tea and caffeine. As mentioned in this month's **Spotlight on...** segment, all true teas naturally contain caffeine. You may have seen charts (similar to the one at right) that give the approximate level of caffeine per 6-ounce cup of tea; however, the information in these charts differs based on the chart's source. As you can see from the range in caffeine levels, it is impossible to determine just how much caffeine is present in a particular cup of tea; however, a general rule of thumb is that black tea contains the most caffeine, while green and white teas contain the least, and oolongs fall somewhere in between (based on their level of oxidation). While this is generally true, the exact level of caffeine is influenced by many factors, including: type of tea; when the leaves were harvested; age of the tea; amount of tea leaves used; amount of water used; length of steep time; etc. In some tests, certain white teas had as much caffeine as black tea!

You also may have heard that tea has more caffeine than coffee. It is true that ounce per ounce by weight, the dry leaf of tea has more caffeine than coffee; however, in the form of the infused beverage, tea has less caffeine ounce per ounce by volume.

Caffeine Levels per 6oz.

Black - 25-110mg

Green - 8-36 mg

Oolong - 12-55 mg

White - 8-30 mg

*The caffeine content of Yellow Teas and Pu'erhs has not yet been identified.

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