

Mark T. Wendell Tea Company Tea Tutorial

As a specialty food and beverage retailer, you have no doubt seen the unprecedented growth in tea consumption in the United States and are realizing its potential as a new product line to help increase profits in your business. The cost of making a cup of tea can range from 6 to 12 cents per cup. If you are serving tea to your customers, just remember that on average, one pound of loose tea makes about 160 cups! In most cases, this translates to a lower price per cup cost than coffee! Since 1904, the Mark T. Wendell Tea Company has been supplying fine teas to tea connoisseurs all over the world. During this time we have gained a superior knowledge of purchasing and marketing specialty teas to potential wholesale clients. Here are a few recommendations to help incorporate specialty tea into your business plan.



Knowledge Is Power, So Educate Yourself!

To quote tea industry author and consultant Jane Pettigrew, “tea sales are grown by engaging others in the amazing experience of tasting and enjoying thousands of different teas available. Knowing basic characteristics of teas from specific regions helps one to assess quality and to describe the teas to potential customers.” This sounds like an easy plan to undertake, but this type of knowledge can take time to achieve. We have found that the best way to learn about the unique world of specialty teas is to get a good background knowledge of tea terminology, tea varieties, cultural aspects (and everything in-between), then move onto the hands on brewing, tea tasting and customer interaction.

To start out, there are many great books out there that can give you the background information to start talking effectively about the terroir and characteristics of the teas that you are offering. We recommend the following:

The Ultimate Tea Lover’s Treasury, by James Norwood Pratt
Published by Tea Society, 2011

The New Tea Companion, by Jane Pettigrew & Bruce Richardson
Published by Benjamin Press, 2008

The Story of Tea, A Cultural History & Drinking Guide, by Mary Lou Heiss and Robert Heiss
Published by Ten Speed Press, 2007

The Tea Enthusiast’s Handbook, by Mary Lou Heiss and Robert Heiss
Published by Ten Speed Press, 2010

What Is Tea And Where Does It Come From?



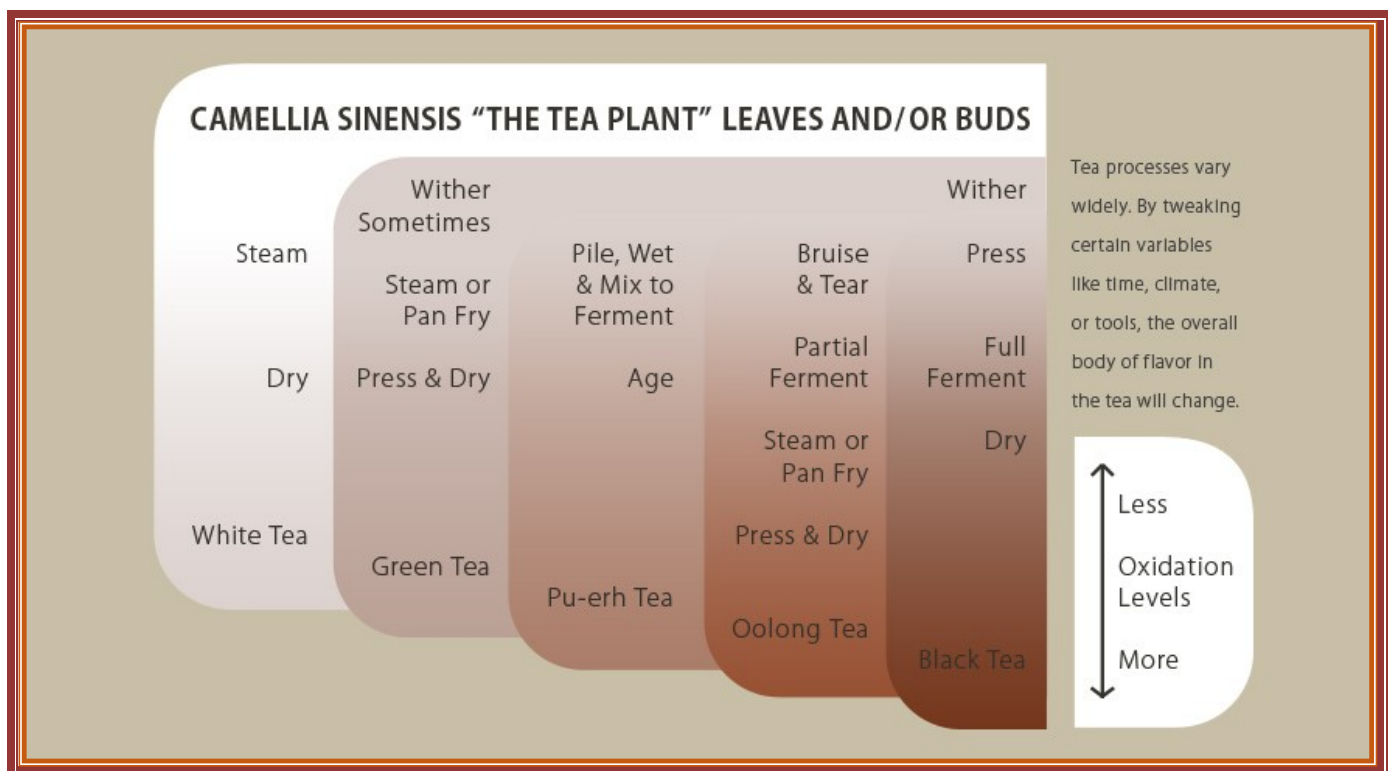
Here are some basics. All tea comes from the tropical plant known as ***Camellia sinensis***. The tea plant grows best in a warm climate with long sunlit days, cool nights and an abundance of rainfall. Tea plants grow at altitudes ranging from sea level to 7,000 feet and on latitudes as far north as Turkey in the mid-east and as far south as Argentina in South America.

Tea is indigenous to China, Tibet, and northern India, though it is cultivated in many other countries across the globe, including Sri Lanka, Japan, Kenya, Turkey, Indonesia, Vietnam, Argentina, Tanzania, Taiwan, Malawi, and Zimbabwe. The most complex teas grow at higher altitudes and many bushes can be cultivated for over 100 years. Tea bushes cover about six million acres of the earth and are harvested

every week during the almost yearlong growing season.

After each winter season, the first small leaves and buds of the tea bush are hand-plucked and harvested. Once exposed to air, the leaf will begin to wither. When the picked leaf becomes pliable, it can then be turned into different types of tea.

A common misperception is that the various styles of tea are grown from different types of plants. The fact is that all styles of tea come from the same ***Camellia sinensis*** bush; however the method in which they are processed varies. It is this variation in processing methods that give us the main classifications and varieties of tea. Some teas are simply steamed after plucking, while others are gently bruised to change the leaves chemistry. Other teas are allowed to ferment at varying levels, some for a long period of time.



The Five Most Common Categories Of Tea

White Tea

This tea is the most delicate type of tea. It is plucked by hand within two days of the first buds maturing. Once gathered, the tea buds are steamed, allowing the natural moisture to evaporate before being dried in the open air. Most white tea is grown in limited quantity in the Fujian Province of China. White tea contains comparable antioxidants to green tea, but it undergoes less processing. It has extremely low caffeine content. When brewed, it yields pale yellow liquor in the cup and it has a light, sweet flavor with a clean finish.

Our Offerings Include:

Organic Flowery Silver Needle (needle bud set)
China Mutan White (bud set with open leaf)
Citrus Blossom White



Green Tea

To produce green tea, fresh leaves are placed on bamboo trays and dried in the sun. The leaves are then placed into hot roasting pans and quickly moved about. They are continuously rolled into balls and re-roasted. This process stops the chemical changes from occurring in the leaf by never allowing it to wither and ferment. By eliminating the fermentation process, the dry leaf retains its green color and natural composition.

Light yellow in color and having a vegetal flavor, green tea is loaded with beneficial antioxidants. Green teas vary in shape and size, ranging from twisted, curled, flat, pointed, half-moon crescent and tight pellets shapes.

Our Offerings Include:

Chinese Green Varieties: Dragonwell, Gunpowder, Cloud & Mist, Young Hyson, Organic Chun Mee and Organic River Mist

Japan Green Varieties: Sencha, Gyokuro Jade Dew and Genmaicha

Scented Pouchong Varieties: Yin Hao Jasmine, China Jasmine, Blooming Flowery Jasmine and Downy Pearl Jasmine



Oolong Tea

After plucking, this tea is wilted in direct sunlight and is then shaken in bamboo baskets to lightly bruise the leaf. The chemicals in the leaf react with the air, producing a reddish leaf color. After a desired amount of time, the leaf is fired and the oxidation process is halted, thus making this a “semi-oxidized” tea. Oolong tea is primarily grown in China and Taiwan (Formosa).

Most oolong teas produced in Chinese plantations are oxidized for a shorter period of time and are therefore lighter in taste and appearance than oolong teas produced in Taiwan, where oxidation levels are traditionally higher. China oolong teas have a curled leaf with brown and green overtones, whereas the higher oxidized Formosa oolongs appear brown in color.

Our Offerings Include:

China Oolong Varieties: Royal Red Robe (Da Hong Pao), Imperial Gold Oolong and Min-Pei Fancy Oolong

Taiwan Oolong Varieties: Formosa Oolong, Brandy Oolong and Evergreen Oolong



Pu-erh Tea

An unusual aged tea from China, Pu-erh is made from fermented Yunnan Black tea. This tea is cultivated in the best growth areas from tall tea bushes. After picking, Pu-erh is created by piling the tea for up to three months, allowing an internal fermentation of the leaf to occur. This process gives Pu-erh unique earthy overtones.

It is usually packaged in compressed shapes of varying sizes, ranging from disks and nest shapes to larger tablets. Known only in China for centuries, this type of tea is believed to have numerous health benefits, ranging from cholesterol reduction and ease of stomachaches. When brewed, pu-erh teas have a musty overtone and a dark brew in the cup.

Our Offerings Include: Pu-erh Tuo Cha (small nest-shaped pieces)
Organic Bold Leaf (loose leaf pu-erh)



Black Tea

In the case of Black tea, the leaves are plucked by hand and then left in the sun until they are pliable enough to be rolled without the leaf splitting. The leaves are then put into a tumbler and rolled. This process causes the juices from the leaves to react with the air and then oxidize. The green leaves turn black and are then fired in drying ovens.

Black tea is the most common consumed in this country and is primarily cultivated in China, India, Sri Lanka, Africa and Indonesia. They are often flavored or scented with fruits or spices. The drying process leaves black tea with more caffeine than other types. Black teas can appear almost dark red or brown in the cup when brewed.

Our Offerings Include:

China Black Varieties: Yunnan, Keemun, Lapsang Souchong (smoky)

Indian Black Varieties: Assam, Darjeeling, Nilgiri

Sri Lankan Black Varieties: Cheericut Ceylon

Taiwanese Black Varieties: Keemun, Lapsang Souchong (Hu-Kwa)

Popular Blends: English Breakfast, Irish Breakfast, Earl Grey and Russian Caravan



Herbal & Fruit Tisanes

Herbal and fruit "teas" are comprised of herbs, spices, fruit pieces, and flavorings; they do not contain the tealeaves of the *Camellia sinensis* plant. Therefore, they are not true teas, as many believe. Often referred to as tisanes, herbal and fruit "teas" come in many unique flavors, shapes and are naturally caffeine free.

Our Offerings Include: Rooibos, Egyptian Chamomile, Ginger-Lemon and Peppermint



Our Offerings Include: Garden Basket Fruit, Barbados Fruit, Sunshine Fruit



Top Selling Mark T. Wendell Tea Company Products By Category

Mark T. Wendell Tea Company Loose Leaf Teas

<u>Our Famous Tea:</u>	Hu-Kwa
<u>Black Teas:</u>	English Breakfast, Cheericup Ceylon, China Keemun, Darjeeling, Russian Caravan, Irish Breakfast, Victorian Afternoon
<u>Pu-erh Teas:</u>	Organic Bold Leaf Pu-erh
<u>Oolong Teas:</u>	Formosa Oolong, China Sechung Oolong, Min-Pei Fancy Oolong, Brandy Oolong
<u>Green Teas:</u>	Cloud & Mist Green, Dragonwell Green, Organic Chun Mee Green, Japanese Genmaicha Green, Gunpowder Green, Young Hyson Green
<u>White Teas:</u>	China Mutan White
<u>Yellow Teas:</u>	Huo Shan Yellow Sprouting
<u>Scented Teas:</u>	Earl Grey, China Jasmine, Rose Congou
<u>Flavored Teas:</u>	Peach Flavored Black, Spiced Masala Chai, Pomegranate Flavored Green, Green Paradise Blend, Blackcurrant Flavored Black, Tropicana Iced Tea Blend
<u>Decaf. Teas:</u>	Decaffeinated English Breakfast, Decaffeinated Earl Grey
<u>Herbal Tisanes:</u>	Rooibos, Peppermint Leaf, Egyptian Camomile, Barbados Fruit, Witch Blend

Imported Packaged Brands

<u>Boston Harbour Tea:</u>	25 ct. teabags, 4 oz. loose tea, & 5 ct. pillow pack display
<u>Lifeboat Tea:</u>	80 count teabags
<u>Hampstead Organics:</u>	Organic Indian Chai, Organic Rosehip, Organic Earl Grey, Organic Lavender
<u>London Fruit & Herb:</u>	Blackcurrant, Peach, Blueberry, Strawberry & Vanilla
<u>Typhoo Tea:</u>	80 count regular and decaffeinated teabags
<u>Foojoo Gold:</u>	Imperial Keemun Black, Jasmine Silver Pearls, Yin Hao Jasmine Green, Before The Rain Tippy Green, Lung Ching Premium Green
<u>Indar Boudoir Blend:</u>	25 teabags
<u>Williamson Fine Teas:</u>	Assorted Elephant Caddies containing 40 teabags

Teapots & Brewing Accessories

For Life Dew Teapots
For Life Curve Teapots
For Life Dew Brew-In-Mug
New Leaf Glass Tea Mug
Mist Iced Tea Jug
Finum Paper Brewing Filters
Extra-Fine Mesh Strainer
2 inch Snap Teaball Spoon

Specialty Tea In America

The consumption of tea spans the globe, with many cultures having their own unique perspectives and ceremonies for consumption. There are no socio-economic boundaries and it is globally embraced. The American specialty tea market has quadrupled in the years from 1993-2010, now being worth \$6.8 billion a year. Similar to the trend of high-end coffee and fine wines, this increase was partly due to consumers who choose to trade up. With more than 3,000 different variations, specialty tea houses and retailers have proliferated in recent years as Americans are capitalizing on the variety of choice, “only the best will do,” and the publicized potential benefits from antioxidant rich brews.

If I Am Retailing Loose Teas In Bulk To My Customers, Which Styles of Tea Should I Offer?

A broad range of teas can satisfy the differing tastes and moods of your customers. So it is best to pick a few items from the different classifications and sub-categories of tea (black, pu-erh, oolong, green, yellow, white, scented, special blends, decaffeinated, flavored and herbals). To create a well-represented tea program, we recommend at least 16-21 teas to start. When your customer base increases, you can add more tea offerings to suit your needs (organic options and more complex varieties of our teas.) These are simply suggestions for a starting point to your tea program and often times need to be altered depending on customer requests and geographical local.

How Much Should Tea Should I Buy Initially?

Since merchandising tea is a new segment of your business, it is often times hard to gauge how much product to initially purchase. We would recommend first orders to be on the conservative side. With our quick service and stocked warehouse, you can re-order when necessary and receive your order in a matter of days. We always have samples available to cup prior to ordering so you can make sure you will be getting what you are looking for. Once you have a gauge on your customers needs, you can increase your orders to the more economical **Five-Pound** packaging options for our loose-leaf teas. These larger quantities have a nice price break factored in. So buying in volume is a great way to lower your resale costs.

How Do I Display And Store The Bulk Tea Leaves?

When tea is stored properly, it will remain fresh for an extended period of time. Tea does not respond well to light, extreme temperatures, moisture and odors. Always remember that tea should never be refrigerated! Therefore steps should be taken to store loose tealeaves in an opaque packaging option that can be sealed airtight. With this in mind, we sell our loose leaf tea offerings in **One and Five Pound** bulk packages that are air tight and can be opened and re-sealed with a zip top closure. We also offer our signature one-pound black and gold tins for purchase and find that they make a standard storage display for vendors who sell bulk teas. Many retailers choose to display loose tealeaves in glass containers, allowing the customer to become intrigued by the sight and variety of the teas offered. This is a good way to create a buzz about the loose teas that you offer, but it is best to avoid glass containers for storing your entire inventory of loose tea. We recommend keeping samples of the different offerings in view and then get fresher tealeaves from the proper storage container when a purchase is made.

What If I Want To Serve Brewed Tea To My Customers, Should I Serve Loose Leaf Tea Or Teabags?



The decision to offer loose tea or tea bags to your customers to brew in-house is based upon your specific needs. There are several differences between both options that one should be aware of. Brewed loose-leaf tea is the best way to make a cup of tea. Optimum taste and the fullest flavor are attained if the leaves are allowed to unfurl slowly, without the tea bag inhibiting the process. Tea bag teas are made from whole tealeaves that are broken to fit into the teabags. Unfortunately, this process can weaken the taste and character of the tea.

To brew loose tea, there are several equipment options from which to choose. You can use traditional or fancy teapots (brew in back or at the table, timed accordingly and then decanted with proper strainer and filters into the customers tea cup, a cup with a tea infuser, or a dedicated brewing machine or hot water dispenser (decanted behind the counter and then served).

For many retailers, the most ideal and proper way to brew tea leaves may not be easy for them to fit into a store that already has several pieces of equipment decided to coffee or other food items. If this is the case, then serving teabag tea may be the answer. They provide you with a serving method that is more convenient for your “on the go” customers and are easy to clean up.

If the ease and portability of teabags appeal to you, but you want to offer your customers the best tea you can, individual cup filters may be the answer. Paper tea filters and reusable permanent filters are used with unbroken tealeaves and are simply placed into the customer’s cup. While boiling water is added and the tea has been allowed to steep, it can be removed and easily discarded.



How To Brew A Pot Of Tea

Different types of tea need different water temperatures and different infusion times, but there are a few steadfast guidelines to follow in order to achieve the perfect cup of tea.

Fill the kettle or teapot with freshly drawn cold water (it must contain oxygen in order to bring out the full flavor of the tea). We recommend using filtered water because the quality of your water will directly affect the taste of your tea. Many towns have water that has too much chlorine and other minerals. When the water is near the boiling point, pour a little into the teapot, swirl around, and tip away. This leaves a hot, clean teapot.

Measure the tea carefully into the pot, allowing one rounded teaspoon or one teabag for each cup required. Many people prefer to use a tea ball or filter to keep the leaves from spreading throughout the teapot. Bring the water to a rolling boil. Do not allow it to boil too long, as it will boil away some of the flavor-releasing oxygen and result in a flat cup of tea. Please note that ***green tea should be made with water that has boiled and allowed to cool for just under a minute.***

Pour the water onto the leaves or tea bags. This saturates the tea allowing the flavor to release naturally. Do not pour the water and then add the tea, this will only result in a poor cup of tea. Allow the tea to infuse for the required number of minutes.

Pu-erh Tea	Steep tea leaves for 2-4 minutes	190-205° F water (just short of boiling)
Black & Flavored Black Tea	Steep tea leaves for 4-5 minutes	200-212° F water (boiling)
Darjeeling Tea	Steep tea leaves for 3 minutes	200-212° F water (boiling)
Oolong Tea	Steep tea leaves for 3-4 minutes	190-205° F water (just short of boiling)
Jasmine Tea	Steep tea leaves for 3-4 minutes	190-200° F water (just short of boiling)
Chinese Green Tea	Steep tea leaves for 2-3 minutes	170-180° F water (boil-cool for 1 min)
Yellow Tea	Steep tea leaves for 1-2 minutes	170-180° F water (boil-cool for 1 min)
Japanese Green Tea	Steep tea leaves for 1-2 minutes	160-170° F water (boil-cool for 2 min)
White Tea	Steep tea leaves for 2-3 minutes	175° F water (boil-cool for 1.5-2 min)
Herbal Tisanes	Steep tea leaves for 5 minutes	200-212° F water (boiling)
Fruit Tisanes	Steep tea leaves for 5 minutes	200-212° F water (boiling)

These guidelines presented above are simply suggestions. Once you and your customers feel more comfortable with preparing tea, you can experiment to create the proper ratio and brewing time for your taste. If you prefer your tea stronger or weaker, never vary the brewing time; simply increase or decrease the amount of tea. If allowed to sit in the teapot, the tea can over-brew and turn bitter.



Merchandising Mark T. Wendell Brand Teas



By serving our loose-leaf teas to your customers, you are providing them with some of the finest teas available. Oftentimes customers will want to purchase the teas you are serving for consumption at home. We pack our full line of loose teas in classic gold 4-ounce tins that can be offered for re-sale to your customers. We also offer several of our most popular sellers in 20 count whole leaf biodegradable teabags as well as a select group of offerings in our pyramid teabag pouches. These are all great ways to increase your tea sales instantly.

Offer a decent cross section of packaged teas that incorporate both the loose teas that you may be serving your customers as well as few unique items. Offer half-dozen 4-ounce tins and several

pyramid teabag pouches.

Our most popular selling **4-ounce tea tins** include: Hu-Kwa, English Breakfast, Irish Breakfast, Russian Caravan, Mountain Kenya, Cheericut Ceylon, China Keemun, Gunpowder Green, Young Hyson Green, Japanese Sencha Green, Formosa Oolong, China Sechung Oolong, Darjeeling, Earl Grey, China Jasmine, Rooibos Herbal and Peppermint Leaf Herbal.



Our expert tea blenders have recently created a premium range of pyramid style teabags. Featuring several flavorful black, green, oolong and white tea selections like spicy chai, fruity mango black, crisp green mint and bold oolong, each teabag variety is packed in a unique re-closable pouch with descriptive label and brewing suggestions. Each pyramid shaped biodegradable teabag contains a generic tag and is loaded with premium whole leaf teas. This is a perfect way to bring the convenience of the teabag into your everyday tea ritual!

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