



# QUICK GUIDE TO JAPANESE TEA

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## ABOUT YUNOMI

Yunomi (pronounced “you-know-me”) is a global launchpad for small-scale tea farms, tea factories and other producers in Japan. We are focused on providing you with all that you need to live a life steeped in tea, and we are dedicated to helping you connect with the people behind the products you consume.

Based in Odawara, Japan, we ship by international airmail to over 74 countries around the world ensuring your tea is as fresh as possible.



Remember, these techniques are guidelines meant to start you off. Depending on your own personal taste, the water type you have available, and of course the specific tea leaves, you should learn to adjust the water amount, temperature, tea leaf amount and steep time to achieve your perfect cup of tea.

For advanced steeping techniques including cold water steeping and ice steeping, visit: [Yunomi.life/steeping](http://Yunomi.life/steeping)

## STANDARD STEEPING

### FOR SENCHA, BANCHA, GENMAICHA, AND HOJICHA

**Serves:** One person (or two people with smaller cups). **Tea:** 5 grams. **Time:** 30-60 sec. **Water amount:** 1 cup. **Water temperature:** 70-100C / 158-212F degrees. *Why the huge temperature range? Use lower temperature water for less astringency, higher temperature water for more astringency.*

#### First steeping (*issen me* 一煎目)

1. Heat your tea pot and cups with hot water. (If your water is not exactly at the temperature you need to steep, the water cools down by about 10C degrees when you transfer it to a cold ceramic vessel. This can be used to adjust the temperature.)
2. Place leaves into teapot, and pour the water.
3. Wait about 30-60 seconds. Longer for a stronger tea.
4. Pour into cup to drink. (Wait for the tea to cool a bit if steeping very hot.)

#### Second steeping (*nisen me* 二煎目)

Same process but steep for a quick 10 seconds. The leftover water clinging to the leaves from the first steeping after you've poured the tea into your cup is still drawing out the flavor from the leaves. So this second steeping is very quick.

#### Third steeping (*sansen me* 三煎目) and more...

Same process but steep for 30 seconds. "And more"? What does that mean you ask? To be truthful, some of us continue steeping the leaves like this for 5, 6, or even 7 times (especially Houjicha). It's a matter of personal taste—how light do you like your tea.

*TIP 1: Hotter temperatures produce more bitter flavors as more of the catechins and caffeine are extracted. Lower temperatures extract less catechin and caffeine so create a more rounded flavor.*

*TIP 2: Use more water or less tea leaves for a lighter flavor. More water is recommended since we generally steep the leaves several times.*

*TIP 3: If making for a lot of people, and do not need to taste each steeping, it is better to steep 3 times to make 3 cups than to use 3x the amount of tea and water.*

## GYOKURO & WARM WATER STEEPING

### FOR SHADED (GYOKURO, KABUSECHA) AND PREMIUM SPRING SENCHA

The gyokuro steeping technique creates a truly syrupy cup of tea and should be used with shaded tea leaves, (i.e. gyokuro) but also any kabusecha.

**Flavor:** Shaded tea leaves have a higher content of theanine amino acids, and this technique draws out the theanine exclusively to create a powerfully rich, thick, syrupy cup of tea that is filled with *umami*, or savoriness. The catechins (which cause *shibumi* or astringency) in the tea leaves begin coming out at a higher temperature, so be sure to steep it at higher temperatures later to enjoy the *shibumi*!

**Serves:** One to two people. Use smaller, shot glass sized cups (*guinomi* in Japanese).

### GYOKURO (FOR A SYRUPY CUP OF TEA AMBROSIA)

**Tea:** 5 grams. **Time:** 2-3 minutes. **Water amount:** 80 cc (or 80 ml, 2.7 fluid ounces, 1/3 cup). **Water temperature:** 40-50°C / 100-120°F.

### KABUSECHA & SENCHA

**Tea:** 3-5 grams (may vary depending on your tea leaf). **Time:** 1.5 – 2 min. **Water amount:** 1/3 cup / 2.7 oz / 80 cc / 80 ml. **Water temperature:** 50-70°C / 122-158°F degrees. *Why the huge temperature range? Use lower temp for less astringency, higher temp for more astringency.*

1. Heat your tea pot and cups with hot water. (If your water is not exactly at the temperature you need to steep, the water cools down by about 10C degrees when you transfer it to a cold ceramic vessel. This can be used to adjust the temperature.)
2. Place leaves into teapot, and pour the water.
3. As the leaves unfurl, they will absorb the water. The level of tea leaves will rise, while the water level will fall. When they have reach about an equal level, your tea is ready.

#### 2nd – 4th Steepings

After this first steep, you can steep 2 – 4 more times at a hotter temperature (and more water, 200 ml), generally 80-100°C (176-212°F) degrees. The second steep can be quick, 10 – 20 seconds as the leaves are primed. The third and fourth steeps may take a little longer, 30 sec. – 1 minute.

#### Time for a Tea Leaf Salad

You now have some "used" tea leaves. After removing much of the bitterness by steeping, the leaves are ready for eating! We usually splash a bit of soy sauce to create a tea leaf salad, but definitely experiment with your own tea leaf recipe!



抹茶

**MATCHA**

## WHAT IS MATCHA?

Matcha is a form of powdered green tea unique to Japanese culture in which tea leaves are shaded before harvest (approx. 4 weeks) to reduce bitterness, then steamed, dried without rolling, and ground into a fine powder. It is the focus of the Japanese tea ceremony, or chado (literally the “way of tea”), in which the formal preparation of the matcha drink for a guest becomes both a form of meditation and silent communication. In modern times, the matcha flavor has found widespread popularity in chocolates, sweets, baked goods and especially latte-style drinks. Culinary grade matcha used here is generally more bitter preventing other flavors from overwhelming the matcha.

## HOW IS MATCHA MADE?

**Cultivation:** The cultivation of tea plants for matcha involves choosing the right type of tea plant (the right “cultivar” or plant with certain characteristics...like a pinot grape vs merlot for wine). The most common cultivar grown in Japan, Yabukita, is great for making sencha green tea, but has too much bitterness and too light of a color to make a high quality matcha.

Fertilization and pest management is the second important aspect of cultivation. To obtain the rich flavor of matcha, plants are heavily fertilized, creating nutrient rich leaves that are a feast for insects. For this reason, organic matcha tends to be less rich and /or more expensive for the same quality vs conventional matcha.

Finally, when the leaves start to come out, farmers will shade the leaves for 4 weeks or more using various methods cutting out 85% or more of the sunlight that reaches the leaves. This causes the plant to produce more chlorophyll in the leaf, which in turn creates a more brilliant green color. The highest grades of matcha uses leaves that were shaded under a canopy allowing room for the leaves to grow, to avoid damage, and to allow for handpicking at harvest time.

**Harvesting:** Machine harvested leaves are slightly less premium than handpicked leaves, but it is the harvest season which really determines the quality of the matcha. Spring-harvested leaves, when the plant is at its peak in leaf production, are the most valued, while summer or autumn leaves are often used for lower quality latte or culinary grade matcha products. See photos at [Yunomi.life/blogs/professionals-guide-to-japanese-tea/how-matcha-is-made](https://yunomi.life/blogs/professionals-guide-to-japanese-tea/how-matcha-is-made)

**Processing:** After harvesting the tea leaves, they are immediately taken to a processing factory to be steamed, then dried in a special oven called. Unlike most Japanese green teas the leaves are not rolled at all, resulting in a drastically different flavor profile. The resulting flaky leaves are then refined, removing leaf stems and veins, and chopped into smaller, even flakes perfect for grinding. Visit [Yunomi.life/collections/green-tea/tencha](https://yunomi.life/collections/green-tea/tencha)

**Grinding:** Finally, a matcha manufacturer will grind the tencha leaves into the fine powder we know as matcha. Grinding by stone mill (electric operated) is the traditional method, but extremely slow. A single commercial grinder may produce as little as 400 grams a day (30-40 grams per hour). Factories grind in a temperature and humidity-controlled room to prevent the powder from degrading.

Other types of grinding are also used when volume / lower price is needed. Depending on the manufacturing process, these machines may produce matcha that is nearly as good as stone mill ground matcha given the same leaves. However, because the larger volume lends itself to greater efficiency, in generally lower quality matcha is produced with this method.

## MATCHA GRADING

Western tea companies often use ceremonial, latte, and culinary labels to grade matcha, but there is no industry definition. Higher quality matcha should be a brilliant green color in both powder and liquid form, be less grainy in texture, and have a richer, sweeter flavor and aroma. A high quality matcha doesn't necessarily froth, but easy frothing with smaller bubbles is a sign of higher quality.

**Heritage Grade** - The very best matcha, those used by tea ceremony schools for formal ceremonies, follow a strict traditional cultivation and production method involving canopy shading, handpicking, and stone mill grinding among other requirements. When we have confirmed that a product has met these requirements, they are labeled “Heritage Grade”.

## MATCHA HEALTH BENEFITS

Premium matcha is infused with the amino acid **L-theanine** (said to induce a calming effect on the brain that simultaneously counteracts and complements the drink's caffeine), and **catechin** (an antioxidant that is researched widely for its positive effects on the human body). Furthermore, ingesting the full leaf in powdered form maximizes your body's intake of these nutrients.

However, because farmers shade tea leaves meant for matcha in order to increase the L-theanine content and decrease the bitter/astringent tasting catechin, an equivalent powdered green tea that was never shaded would have more antioxidants. Such spring-harvested powdered tea is not commonly available outside of Japan, but can be found on Yunomi at [yunomi.life/collections/matcha/green-tea-powders](https://yunomi.life/collections/matcha/green-tea-powders)

# UNDERSTANDING JAPANESE TEA THRU THE PRODUCTION PROCESS

By Yunomi Tea Merchant, Ian Chun

In the short time I have been involved in the tea industry (since 2009), I have come to an understanding of Japanese tea through the production process due to my close work with farms and factories. This approach to Japanese tea is simultaneously more complex and easier to understand. So here, I will only outline it briefly.

1. Region – latitude, climate
2. Terrain – flat vs mountainous, soil conditions (acidity, microbial state)
3. Plant (cultivar, age) – Different cultivars or cultivated varieties of tea plants have different characteristics much like different types of grapes used for wine. The age of the plant will also play a factor in flavor, as well as crop yield.
4. Cultivation – Fertilization, pest control, soil development, plant management.
5. Harvesting – When the tea leaf is harvested is very important to determining what kind of tea can be created. Very few farmers harvest 4 times a year. Most harvest 2-3 in the Spring, Summer and Autumn. Spring tea is generally considered the most delicate because the large amount of new leaves that come out means farmers will harvest while the leaf is still young and tender. In summer and autumn, to create volume farmers will allow the leaf to grow much larger and therefore stiffer and more bitter. How the tea is harvested (hand plucked, handheld shears, small scale machine cutting, large scale machine cutting) also plays a factor in the creation of the leaf.
6. Processing – Steaming time determines what type of tea is created; you will get a light yellow, transparent liquor with a short steaming time (*asamushi*) of 20 sec, or a deep green, opaque liquor with deep steaming (*fukamushi*, 60-90 sec). The cultivar and size of the leaf also determines how this changes. After steaming, the leaf can be dried as is to create a flaky leaf called *tencha*, used to create *matcha* powder, or can be rolled in different ways. Most Chinese green teas are pan fired instead of steamed, and that tradition does continue in Japan to some extent as a tea called *Kamairicha*.
7. Refinement or finishing – After drying, the tea leaf is called *aracha* (literally “rough tea”, or unfinished tea). To refine it for production, finishing factories (also the industry’s wholesalers) will remove leaf stems, small bits of leaf, and powdery bits which get turned into *kukicha*, *mecha*, and *konacha* (and often used for tea bags). The will also blend leaf from different sources together to create a specific flavor profile and/or greater volume for a single product.
8. Post-processing: Tea may also be green-roasted to remove extra moisture, which preserves the leaf longer and may impart some roasty or sweet flavors. True roasting of the leaf to create *Hojicha* allows you to enjoy a refreshing, low caffeine tea.
9. Storage – Humidity and exposure to light or high temperatures degrade the flavor, aroma, and color of the tea leaf. Storage in an airtight, cool, dry area is important. For long term storage, a refrigerated environment is ideal. Green teas are most affected, but too often tea at non-Japanese merchants is stored in terrible conditions...not sealed, in hot warehouses.
10. Steeping – For every tea type, these factors will change the flavor of the tea: tea amount, steeping time, water temperature, water amount, and water type.

Again, a very brief overview. I’ll be expanding on this further at [Yunomi.life/production](https://yunomi.life/production)

Pronunciation note: The underlined portion of the term is accented. Items in red are included with our 12-tea mystery set: [Yunomi.life/products/japanese-green-tea-set](https://yunomi.life/products/japanese-green-tea-set)

## MAJOR TEAS & TERMS

**CHA** – 茶 – The character and word used in Japan (and other Chinese-influenced cultures) for tea. It is also often used for other non-tea infusions. When referring to Japanese tea, particularly green tea, it is more common to place an honorific “oh” in front of the “cha” to become “ocha”.

**RYOKUCHA** – 緑茶 – Japanese word for “green tea” referring to all types of green teas found in Japan, China and elsewhere. “Green” refers to the fact that the tea is “fixed” at the natural green-colored state before it begins to oxidize (turning into black or oolong tea).

**NIHONCHA** – 日本茶 – The term meaning “Japanese tea”.

**SENCHA** – 煎茶 – The standard and most common form of Japanese tea, a green tea that is “fixed” by steaming, then rolled into a needle-like shape, and dried. Sencha, depending on the season of harvest and cultivation process, will have a mix of catechins that create astringency and amino acids (particularly L-theanine) that create a sweet-savoriness called *umami* (the fifth taste).

**BANCHA** – 番茶 – The same basic process as sencha, but utilizing leaves that have been allowed to grow larger, and therefore generally harvested in summer or autumn. It should be noted that “bancha” as a term is often used in Western Japan to mean roasted green tea (see below). Bancha is generally more astringent as a result of the relatively higher level of catechins compared to amino acids though not as much as spring-harvested sencha. Autumn harvested bancha will also be lower in caffeine in general.

**FUKAMUSHICHA** – 深蒸し茶 – The length of time that a leaf is steamed determines much of its flavor. When the leaf is steamed for 1-3 minutes, we call it deep-steamed or *fukamushi*. The result is leaf that is more powdery than standard sencha and steeps into a deep-green tea with a rich flavor. Alternatively, light-steamed sencha uses the term, *asamushi*, and is more traditionally used with higher-grade leaf.

**GENMAICHA** – 玄米茶 – Genmaicha is a type of tea made by mixing sencha or bancha with toasted rice. Often called “brown rice tea” in English, toasted white, short-grain rice is more often used than actual brown rice. Though there are variations, a 1:1 ratio of toasted rice and bancha is standard.

**GYOKURO** – 玉露 – While the processing is the same as sencha, gyokuro is cultivated by shading for approximately three weeks prior to harvest. Various agricultural techniques are also used to create a concentration of flavor in the leaves. The result is a leaf that has much higher amino acid content, and will steep into a rich, savory tea syrup.

**HŌJICHA** – 焙じ茶 – Roasted green tea, usually roasted from bancha. Also spelled “hojicha” or “houjicha”. It often has a chocolaty aroma, is naturally sweet and slightly smoky to taste.

**MATCHA** – 抹茶 – More correctly written “maccha”, this is the green tea powder that has become popular in the West in recent years and used in the Japanese tea ceremony. It is made from tea leaves called *tencha* (see below) that have been ground into a very fine powder. Higher quality matcha is generally spring harvested and ground with a stone mill, while lower quality matcha may be summer or autumn harvested and ground using a ball mill.

## OTHER TEAS

**ARACHA** – 荒茶 – Meaning “rough” or “unrefined”, this is tea at the state just after the initial processing, up to the point that it is dried. From here, leaf stems, dust, broken leaf bits are separated out, and the leaves may be combined with other leaves to produce more refined sencha, gyokuro, etc.

**KABUSECHA** – 被せ茶 – Like gyokuro, Kabusecha is also shaded before harvest, generally about 2 weeks, and thus has a higher amino acid content. Originally used for blending to increase the quality of a sencha or the volume of a gyokuro, in recent years it has been cultivated to achieve a perfect balance between sencha and gyokuro.

**KONACHA** – 粉茶 – As tea leaf is rolled into sencha needles, inevitably some of the leaves break apart. The smallest particles as well as the fine hairs on the underside of younger leaves are sifted out of the aracha and gathered to create konacha. Not quite a powder, this tea is often used in tea bags and for quick steeping at sushi restaurants.

**KAMAIRICHA** – 釜炒り茶 – Instead of steaming the tea leaves to stop oxidization, farmers process their tea by using heating it in a pan (“kama-iri” means “pan roast”). The process is similar to the way Chinese create green tea.

**KARIGANE** – 雁音 – When made from gyokuro or high grade sencha, kukicha leaf stem tea is often given a more elegant name, karigane or “the sound of geese”. The motif of geese is, in traditional Japanese poetic aesthetic, a symbol of beauty. It was said that when migrating, they would carry a twig or branch to rest on in the sea. Karigane is named after this image.

**KUKICHA** – 茎茶 – Like konacha above, leaf stems are sorted out of aracha after final drying, and gathered together to make kukicha or leaf stem tea (sometimes called “twig tea”). Sweeter, less astringent than regular sencha, you will also find it mixed with sencha leaves. Kukicha can be roasted or unroasted.

**KURADASHICHA** – 蔵出し茶 – Kuradashicha is sencha tea that has been aged in storage for a year or more. Sealed airtight and stored in a temperature-controlled atmosphere to prevent the type of quick degradation that might occur in homes, the catechins causing sharp astringency will breakdown creating a more rounded flavor. It is said that Tokugawa Ieyasu, the first shogun or warrior general who united Japan in 1600, was fond of kuradashicha.

**KYŌBANCHA** – 京番茶 – In March, farmers prepare their tea fields for the spring flush in May by trimming the tea hedges. The clean shape of the hedge forms a base that allows them to easily machine cut and harvest only new leaves. But what of the leaves that have grown over the winter months? Farmers in the Kyoto region have a tradition of making kyōbancha from these large, thick winter leaves. Kyōbancha is harvested, steamed, dried without any rolling, then roasted. The result is a light, sweet, and refreshing roasted tea that is so low in caffeine, Kyoto residents call this tea “akachan bancha” or “bancha for babies”.

**MECHA** – 芽茶 – Leaf tip tea is made by sorting out leaf tips that have broken off during processing. Not quite as small as konacha, the liquid of mecha tea is not as cloudy, but at the same time steeps just as quickly. As a derivative product, mecha tea allows you to enjoy high quality tea at a more reasonable price.

**SHINCHA** – 新茶 – Literally “new tea”, shinchā can refer simply to the first flush of leaves in the spring processed into usually sencha, but also gyokuro, hōjicha, etc. However, you will also find tea brands in Japan who market summer and autumn shinchā as there are subsequent flushes of new leaves in each season. More interesting perhaps is shinchā that is

specially picked (often by hand) and processed for tea competitions. They may be picked or harvested by machine earlier than usual to use smaller, younger, more delicate leaves in processing. It is much more difficult to process as the leaves are delicate and can break apart easily, and the winners of these competition grade teas may wholesale at more than \$2000 per kilogram!

## RARE TEAS

**AWA BANCHA** – 阿波番茶 – The central area of mountainous Tokushima Prefecture (an area previously called “Awa”) has a long tradition of producing a rare form of fermented tea leaves called awa bancha. Fully-grown tea leaves are handpicked in July, boiled, rolled, then placed in a barrel for over one month to ferment. The lactic acid produced as a result gives the tea complex pungency.

**BATABATACHA** – バタバタ茶 – A pu-erh-like tea from Toyama Prefecture on the coast of the Sea of Japan, batabatacha is served at events such as when introducing the bride after the wedding ceremonies in the region.

**GOISHICHA** – 碁石茶 – The ability to produce this tea had nearly disappeared just a decade ago with only one remaining commercial producer. Meant to be brewed in boiling water, the complex flavor offers a pungent sweetness.

**MIMASAKACHA** – 美作番茶 – Slightly fermented, mimasakacha is a tea that was famously drunk by the respected Miyamoto Musashi, a famous 16th century swordsman. Made by using tea leaves and stems harvested in late summer, leaves and stems are boiled in an iron pan then spread out onto a straw mat. Cooked water used for boiling the tea is sprinkled onto the tea leaves as it sundries forming a tea incrustation coloring the tea leaves amber as they dry.

**TAMACHA** – 玉茶 – Literally “ball tea”, tamacha is a derivative of the sencha rolling process are tea leaves that get rolled into balls instead of the usual needle shape. Packed together, these balls of sencha leaves unfurl slowly giving you a light sencha that continues to produce flavor after several steeps. Offered only by a handful of producers, these small sencha pellets can even be eaten as crunchy snack.

**TAMARYOKUCHA** – 玉緑茶 – Literally “ball green tea”, tamaryokucha is a type of sencha that skips the very last part of the rolling process that extends the leaves into needles. As a result, the leaves will curl slightly as they dry. Traditionally, it was this process that was used when export sencha to Russia during the 1930s to imitate Chinese gunpowder green teas. Tamaryokucha can be produced by both steaming and pan-firing; when steamed it is also called *guricha*.

**TENCHA** – 碾茶 – These leaves are shaded for about four weeks before harvest, like gyokuro and kabusecha in order to create a leaf that is rich in sweet and savory amino acids and relatively lower in astringent tasting catechins. They are produced in order to be ground into the fine tea powder we call matcha. Unlike sencha or gyokuro, these leaves are dried without rolling which turns the leaves into small flakes.

**TOSA BANCHA** – 土佐番茶 – Tosa bancha is a type of bancha made by pan-firing autumn harvested tea leaves then blending it with *kishimame*, a herb common in many parts of Asia, which adds a natural sweetness to the tea.

# TEA WARE, UTENSILS & OTHER TERMS

**CHADŌ** – 茶道 – Written with the characters for “tea” and “path”, this is the term for the Japanese tea ceremony. Terms *sadō* and *chanoyū* are also used.

**CHASAJI** – 茶さじ – A small scoop usually made from bamboo or wood, used to scoop tea leaves from storage containers into tea pots.

**CHASEN** – 茶筴 – A tea whisk, made from bamboo, used to whisk matcha tea powder into matcha tea.

**CHASHAKU** – 茶杓 – A thin bamboo scoop used to scoop matcha tea powder from storage containers into the matcha bowl.

**CHAWAN** – 茶碗 – A Japanese tea cup, generally shaped like an English tea cup without the handle.

**GUINOMI** – ぐい呑み – A small cup, usually around 30 ml (1 fl oz), used for gyokuro. This type of cup is more often seen for use with Japanese sake.

**HŌHIN** – 宝瓶 – Also spelled “houhin” and sometimes called *shiboridashi* (絞り出し), this is a small Japanese tea pot without a handle similar to a Chinese gaiwan. It often has a mesh strainer, but may have only slits that combine with the lid to serve as a strainer. Primarily used for steeping gyokuro at low temperatures of 40°C – 60°C (104°F – 140°F) degrees, using a hohin for steeping tea at hotter temperatures should be avoided as it may lead to burns.

**KYŪSU** – 急須 – The word for a Japanese tea pot. The most common form is a *yokode kyūsu*, in which a handle protrudes straight out of the side of the pot. Traditionally this makes it easy to pour for a guest sitting directly in front of you (as you would in a traditional Japanese *tatami* mat room), and in quick, intermittent bursts allowing the tea to mix inside the pot.

**SHIBUMI** – 渋味 – means “astringency” when referring to tea and other foods (*nigami* is the word for bitterness). It carries an additional positive poetic nuance as the term is paired with a Japanese poetic aesthetic, *shibui* - an aesthetic of simple, subtle, and unobtrusive beauty.

**TEMOMI** – 手揉み – The process of rolling by hand. The Japanese actually use a word that translates literally into “massage”, and most farmers who process leaves themselves will learn and practice temomi in order better understand their rolling machines. There are several types of rolling techniques involved in the 5-7 hour long handrolling process, and most factories have specific machines that imitate each technique. Expertly adjusting the strength, speed, humidity, etc. of the processing machines is a direct result of the knowledge required for handrolling.

**TETSUMI** – 手摘み – Picking by hand. Due to the high cost of labor in Japan, very few tea farmers pick by hand regularly. However, to win competitions, it is definitely preferable to pick by hand, and farmers often rely on friends, family, and even their own dedicated customers to help them. Holding tea picking events, usually in May, the tea picked by tea lovers is made into some of the most delicious, most beautiful sencha or gyokuro tea that you can find from Japan.

**UMAMI** – 旨味 – Umami, or savoriness, is one of the five basic tastes, (together with sweet, sour, bitter and salty). A loan word from Japanese (旨味) coming from the kanji for delicious (*umai* 旨い) and taste (*aji* 味). In *Camellia sinensis* (tea plant), the umami taste is derived from the amino acids in the leaf, particularly the glutamic acid analog, L-theanine. It is present in

leaves when they are first forming, and decreases with exposure to the sun (during which catechin forms increasing the astringency of a leaf). Shading techniques help Japanese tea farmers maintain a high level of theanine in their leaves when cultivating for kabusecha, gyokuro, and tencha (leaves used for making matcha tea).

**YUNOMI** – 湯呑み – Short for *yunomi chawan*, this tea cup is generally shaped like a mug cup without a handle and with smaller diameter. A *meoto yunomi* is a pair of cups for married couples in which the wife’s cup is slightly smaller than the husband’s cup. In Japanese homes, each family member would have their own personal yunomi as well as their own personal chopsticks for daily use.

**YUZAMASHI** – 湯冷まし – Prior to the invention of automatic water heaters with temperature settings, and prior to the widespread use of thermometers, you would boil water, and cool it down by warming your tea pot and cups. However, to cool the water down even further for such teas as gyokuro, another bowl is used called a yuzamashi (literally “water cooling”).

~**YAKI** – ~焼 – This suffix means “ware” as in “tea ware” and “ceramic ware”. Some of the more famous styles and traditions are ceramic ware called banko-yaki, tokoname-yaki, as well as porcelains such as kutani-yaki, arita-yaki, and kiyomizu-yaki. Most of these are named after the region in which the traditions were created and produced.

Want more info? Check out photographs and more in-depth explanations in our shop or in our glossary!

[www.yunomi.life](http://www.yunomi.life)

[www.yunomi.us/glossary](http://www.yunomi.us/glossary)