



Tea Talk

My talk will cover some facts and figures about the Tea of today. My biggest resource was the website of the UK Tea Council, so my statistics are rather slanted that way – after all we are looking into tea in Jane's time.

All tea is produced from a plant called *Camellia sinensis*. The thousands of different varieties of teas available in the world only vary by the region it is grown, the time of year picked, and the processing method.

Tea is the most popular manufactured drink in the world in terms of consumption. Its consumption equals all other manufactured drinks in the world – including coffee, chocolate, soft drinks, and alcohol – put together.

The following table shows the amount of tea production (in tonnes) by leading countries in recent years.

Data are generated by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations as of February 2012.^[69]

Rank	Country ^[69]	2008	2009	2010	2011
1	 China	1,274,984	1,375,780	1,467,467	1,640,310
2	 India	987,000	972,700	991,180	1,063,500
3	 Kenya	345,800	314,100	399,000	377,912
4	 Sri Lanka	318,700	290,000	282,300	327,500
5	 Turkey	198,046	198,601	235,000	221,600
6	 Vietnam	173,500	185,700	198,466	206,600
7	 Iran	165,717	165,717	165,717	162,517
8	 Indonesia	150,851	146,440	150,000	142,400
9	 Argentina	80,142	71,715	88,574	96,572
10	 Japan	96,500	86,000	85,000	82,100
Total	World	4,211,397	4,242,280	4,518,060	4,321,011

According to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization in 2007, the largest importer of tea, by weight, was the Russian Federation, followed by the United Kingdom, Pakistan, and the United States.¹

the largest exporters of tea are Kenya, China, India and Sri Lanka.

The largest exporter of black tea in the world is Kenya,

The largest producer and consumers of black tea in the world is India.^{[74][75]}

India (pop: 1.2 billion) is the world's largest tea-drinking nation, although the per capita consumption of tea remains a modest 750 grams per person every year.

Turkey, (pop 76 million) with 2.5 kg of tea consumed per person per year, is the world's greatest per capita consumer. 2.5kg is just over 5 pounds of tea.

The most common types of tea:

White, yellow, green, oolong, black, Pu'er dark,
plus these two,

Flower

- Flowering tea or blooming tea consist each of a bundle of dried tea leaves wrapped around one or more dried flowers.

Herbal

- Herbal tea, or tisane is any beverage made from the infusion of herbs, spices, or other plant material in hot water, and usually does not contain caffeine.

Type	Water temp.	Steep time
White tea	65 to 70 °C (149 to 158 °F)	1–2 minutes
Yellow tea	70 to 75 °C (158 to 167 °F)	1–2 minutes
Green tea	75 to 80 °C (167 to 176 °F)	1–2 minutes
Oolong tea	80 to 85 °C (176 to 185 °F)	2–3 minutes
Black tea	99 °C (210 °F)	2–3
Pu'er tea	95 to 100 °C (203 to 212 °F)	Limitless

Herbal tea 212 F 4-6 minutes
Flower tea

- Bring water to a boil and pour over tea. Steep until the leaves have completely opened (3-4 minutes). Swirl tea to even the flavor before serving.

Did you know that around 90% of tea comes in tea bags?



In 1907, American tea merchant Thomas Sullivan began distributing samples of his tea in small bags of Chinese silk with a drawstring. Consumers noticed they could simply leave the tea in the bag and reuse it with fresh tea. However, the potential of this distribution/packaging method would not be fully realised until later on. In 1953 Tetley launched the tea bag to the UK and it was an immediate success. Tea leaves are packed into a small envelope (usually composed of paper) known as a tea bag. The use of tea bags is easy and convenient, making them popular for many people today. However, the use of tea bags has negative aspects, as well. The tea used in tea bags is commonly fannings or "dust", the waste product produced from the sorting of higher quality loose leaf tea, and because fannings and dust are a lower quality of the tea to begin with, the tea found in tea bags is less finicky when it comes to brewing time and temperature. However, as we all know, this is not true for all brands of tea; many high quality specialty teas are available in bag form. The "pyramid tea bag" (or sachet) introduced in 1996, attempts to address one of the connoisseurs' arguments against paper tea bags by way of its three-dimensional tetrahedron shape, which allows more room for tea leaves to expand while steeping

However, some types of pyramid tea bags have been criticised as being environmentally unfriendly, since their synthetic material is not as biodegradable as loose tealeaves and paper tea bags.

Other Tea Formats

Compressed Tea



Some teas (particularly Pu-erh tea) are still compressed for transport, storage, and ageing convenience. The tea brick remains in use in the Himalayan countries or Mongolian steppes. The tea is prepared and steeped by first loosening leaves off the compressed cake using a small knife. Compressed teas can usually be stored for longer periods of time without spoilage when compared with loose leaf tea.

Instant Tea



In recent times, "instant teas" are becoming popular, similar to freeze-dried instant coffee. Similar products also exist for instant iced tea, due to the convenience of not requiring boiling water. Instant tea was developed in the 1930s, but not commercialized until later. Nestlé introduced the first instant tea in 1946.

Tea in Britain

Tea first became established in Britain because of the influence of a foreign princess.



Catherine of Braganza, 1638-1705, the queen of Charles II. A lover of tea since her childhood in Portugal had much to do with it becoming a fashionable and widely drunk beverage. She brought tea-drinking to the English royal court, and set a trend for the beverage among the aristocracy of England in the seventeenth century.



The fashion soon spread beyond these elite circles to the middle classes, and it became a popular drink at the London coffee houses where wealthy men met to do business and discuss the events of the day. But the tea that was being drunk in those seventeenth century coffee houses would probably be considered undrinkable now. Between 1660 and 1689, tea sold in coffee houses was taxed in liquid form. The whole of the day's tea would be brewed in the morning, taxed by a visiting excise officer, and then kept in barrels and reheated as necessary throughout the rest of the day. So a visitor to the coffee house in the late afternoon would be drinking tea that had been made hours before in the early morning!

The quality of the drink improved after 1689, when the system of taxation was altered so that tea was taxed by the leaf rather than by the liquid.



Some coffee houses also sold tea in loose leaf form so that it could be brewed at home. This meant that it could be enjoyed by women, who did not frequent coffee houses. Since it was relatively expensive, tea-drinking in the home must have been largely confined to wealthier households, where women would gather for tea parties. Such a party would be a genteel social occasion, using delicate china pots and cups, silver tea kettles and elegantly carved tea jars and tea tables.

. Both green and black teas were popular, and sugar was frequently added (though like tea, this was an expensive import); in the seventeenth century though, it was still unusual for milk to be added to the beverage. We can imagine then that while seventeenth century men were at the coffee houses drinking tea and exchanging gossip, their wives gathered at one another's homes to do exactly the same thing - just in a more refined atmosphere!

In the eighteenth century there was a clear gap between the large number of people who wanted to enjoy tea regularly, and the relatively small number of people who could actually afford to do so.



And into this gap stepped the **smugglers**. If tea was smuggled in, no duty was paid on it, so it could be sold much more cheaply. Highly-organised smuggling networks were developed to cater for the popular demand for tea. By the later eighteenth century, it is estimated that more tea was smuggled into Britain than was brought in legally. By 1785 the government (under pressure from legal tea merchants whose profits were being seriously undermined by all the smuggling) slashed the duty on tea, making it much more affordable. This wiped out the illegal smuggling trade virtually overnight. It still was not cheap, and for many years tea was often adulterated with leaves from other plants or with leaves that had already been brewed, which made it more affordable but much less pleasant! There was a great deal of concern about adulteration - some unscrupulous individuals added poisonous chemicals to make green 'tea' the right colour - and these concerns led to an increase in popularity in black tea,



A number of well-educated people voiced their opinions on Tea, both for and against. In 1748 John Wesley, the great preacher and founder of the Methodist movement, was arguing for complete abstinence from tea, on the grounds that it gave rise to 'numberless disorders, particularly those of a nervous kind'.



In 1757 the philanthropist Jonas Hanway published an essay on the effects of tea drinking as it caused 'paralytic and nervous disorders'. He was particularly concerned about its effect on women and asked: 'How many sweet creatures of your sex, languish with weak digestion, low spirits and nervous complaints? Tell them to change their diet, and among other articles leave off drinking tea, it is more than probable the greatest part of them will be restored to health.' He also appealed to their vanity - insisting that due to women drinking tea 'there is not quite so much beauty in this land as there was'. He also argued that the poor could ill-afford to spend their money on tea, claiming that 'those will have tea who have not bread', and that children born to poor mothers were dying because their mothers were spending all their money on tea, and drinking this 'liquid fire' while breast-feeding.

This, he claimed, had led to a decline in numbers in the workforce, which he believed was obstructing agriculture and manufacturing, and would leave the country open to attack because there would not be enough fit men for the army. Thus Hanway urged the rich to give up tea drinking, in the hope that their example would be followed by the poor, on whose labour Britain depended. Much of Hanway's essay is then based on the assumption that the injurious habits of the poor must be controlled, not for the sake of poor themselves, but because a decline in their numbers or would ultimately be damaging to the interests of the rich.

In 1758 an anonymous author entered the debate with a pamphlet entitled *The Good and Bad Effects of Tea Consider'd*,

He claimed that the practice of tea-drinking in the afternoon among working class women meant that they were 'neglecting their spinning knitting etc spending what their husbands are labouring hard for, their children are in rags, gnawing a brown crust, and these 'artful hussy's' drink spirits and complain about their husbands. Unsurprisingly, this author was set against the practice of providing servants with an allowance for tea.

Finally someone in favour of tea.



The eminent intellectual Dr. Samuel Johnson, a devotee of tea, so disagreed with Hanway's 1757 essay that he published a hilariously satirical review of it in the *Literary Magazine*, a monthly journal. (This is a rather long item – you can read it on the internet under Samuel Johnson's satirical review of tea)

Johnson was also perceptive enough to note that often tea-drinking was just an excuse for bringing people together: 'a pretence for assembling to prattle, for interrupting business' - but unlike tea's critics, who saw such gatherings as dangerous (particularly among the working classes), Johnson saw no harm in it. Thus he has much in common with many modern tea-drinkers, who delight in getting together with a cuppa for a gossip and a giggle.

Given the insistence of some eighteenth-century authors of a link between tea-drinking and 'dram-drinking', it is somewhat ironic then that tea-drinking was actually being used as a weapon for the temperance movement - a movement that was primarily an attempt by sections of the ruling classes to get the working classes to give up alcohol. Virtually since historical records began, alcoholic drinks had been a central part of the diet of men, women and even children in Britain. There was some sense in this: weak alcoholic drinks could quench the drinker's thirst without the risk of contracting disease from contaminated water. But the eighteenth century saw a rise in the popularity of strong wines such as port among the upper classes, and of spirits, particularly gin, among the working classes.

In the nineteenth century there was the inevitable backlash; inspired primarily by upper class fears that gin-sodden working class would be difficult to control and unable to work. Thus a movement developed in support of temperance - the drinking of alcohol only in moderation, if at all.



Tea was useful to the temperance movement because it offered a refreshing, thirst-quenching alternative to alcohol that was cheap and (made of course from boiled water) safe to drink.

Preachers of temperance urged people to sign a pledge to give up drinking alcohol, and millions did so (although merely signing the paper was no guarantee of a future of abstinence). Often this took place at mass meetings, and tea would be served to those who attended. The Methodist church was at the forefront of the temperance movement and often served tea at its meetings, rather ironically since its founder, John Wesley, had been so anti-tea.

During the 1830s the movement was so successful that businessmen recognised that there was a gap in the market for catering outlets that sold non-alcoholic refreshments - a temperance alternative to pubs and inns. A great many new cafes and coffee houses opened up. In principal similar to the coffee houses of the seventeenth century, they were different in that these new businesses catered to the needs of ordinary people, not just wealthy men. From the 1880s, tea rooms and tea shops became popular and fashionable, particularly among women, for whom they offered a most welcome and respectable environment in which to meet, chat and relax, without the need to be accompanied by a man. Such a luxury in 1880.

