
Tea — Classification of tea types

Thé — Classification des types de thé



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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

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Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html.

Introduction

Tea (*Camellia sinensis*) is an important agricultural crop that is grown in the tropical and sub-tropical regions of the world. The tender shoots and leaves of the plant are processed and used to prepare an aromatic infusion which is consumed globally as a beverage. Tea is known to be one of the most popular beverages in the world and it is thought to be the most widely consumed non-alcoholic drink after water.

There are many different types of tea. The most common are black tea, green tea, white tea, oolong tea, dark tea and yellow tea.

International Standards for the preparation of tea are based on processing fresh tea leaves and aeration. The basic tea types are black tea (see ISO 3720), green tea (see ISO 11287), white tea (see ISO/TR 12591), oolong tea (see ISO 20716), dark tea and yellow tea. These six tea types can be reprocessed or further-processed to create products such as scented tea, compressed tea and instant tea.

This document outlines principles and a classification of the six tea types. The classification will allow consumers, world tea traders and governments to have a clear understanding of the different types of tea through their processing techniques.

Tea — Classification of tea types

1 Scope

This document establishes a classification for the types of tea produced from the plant *Camellia sinensis* (L.) O. Kuntze.

It is applicable to the production, scientific research, teaching, trade and inspection of tea.

It does not apply to the infusions from herbs or fruits other than *Camellia sinensis* (L.) O. Kuntze referred to as “tea”.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminology databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <https://www.electropedia.org/>

3.1

fresh tea leaf

material plucked from the tender leaves, buds and shoots of the varieties of *Camellia sinensis* (L.) O. Kuntze by hand or by using machinery

3.2

tea

products processed by characteristic techniques exclusively using *fresh tea leaves* (3.1) and known to be suitable for consumption

3.3

shaping

process to press the soft and pliable *fresh tea leaves* (3.1) into a particular shape such as flat, strip, hemispherical, round, spiral, etc. by hand or mechanical forces during processing

3.4

withering

process by which *fresh tea leaves* (3.1) lose moisture through evaporation at a certain temperature and humidity

Note 1 to entry: At the end of this process, the fresh tea leaves become flaccid, limp and pliable, and suitable for the next process.

3.5

enzyme inactivation

fixing

process by which the key enzymes polyphenol oxidase (PPO) and peroxidase (POD) in tea leaves are inactivated by heating, including steaming and pan frying