

A white ceramic coffee cup filled with dark coffee, topped with a thin layer of foam, sits on a matching white saucer. The cup and saucer are positioned on the left side of the frame, resting on a rustic, weathered wooden surface with prominent grain and knots. The lighting is soft, highlighting the textures of the wood and the smooth surface of the cup.

Food Writers New Zealand

# **HANDBOOK**

tea and coffee

# TEA

Tea is made from the herb *Camellia sinensis* and is processed into a number of different types of tea, of which the most well known are black, oolong, green and white tea. The best tea is hand-harvested taking only the fresh new growth at the top of the bush, including two tender leaves and a bud.

## CAFFEINE AND ANTIOXIDANTS

All teas produced from the *Camellia sinensis* contain caffeine which is naturally found in the plant itself. 'In the cup' however, caffeine is typically released in varying quantities depending on the type of tea and a number of factors with black tea generally delivering the most, followed by oolong, green, then white tea imparting the least. The *Camellia sinensis* plant contains an abundance of antioxidant properties, and was originally used as a medicinal herb in China nearly 5000 years ago. The benefits of these are found not only in green tea, but all teas produced from the same plant, including black tea.

## PROCESSING

Depending on the type of tea, there are a number of different stages in processing:

- Withering/drying
- Rolling/roll-breaking
- Fermentation/oxidation
- Firing/baking
- Sorting/grading

## GRADES OF TEA

There are no internationally recognised standards defining exact grades with respect to particle size, distribution or any other characteristics and they vary considerably from each factory and each country. Colour and flavour of tea is closely related to leaf size – the larger the leaf the lighter in both colour and flavour it will typically be. Due to surface area exposed to hot water, a dust grade will therefore deliver the stronger cup of tea. In terms of quality, healthy leaf, careful processing and freshness are key. The size of the leaf does not determine quality, there can equally be low-quality loose/large leaf tea as there can be high-quality small grade teabag tea. Each grade has its own merits and appeals to different consumer preferences.

## TYPES OF TEA

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<b>Black tea</b>	Is withered to reduce moisture content, rolled to disrupt the cell structure, then exposed to air and allowed to oxidise to a carefully controlled level before firing which arrests the fermentation by reducing moisture down to approximately 3%. The result is a dark leaf and coppery-brown brew with a distinct rich aroma.
<b>Oolong tea</b>	After withering and gentle rolling, is partially fermented (semi-oxidised) before rolling again and drying. This variation gives a character that is stronger than green tea but more delicate than black tea.
<b>Green tea</b>	Is produced first steamed (Japanese style) or pan-fried (Chinese style) which de-enzymes the leaf to halt oxidation. The leaf is then rolled/formed before drying without any fermentation process. The resulting beverage is a delicately flavoured greenish-yellow infusion.
<b>White tea</b>	Is best produced from only the fresh buds of new growth, carefully handled to avoid bruising before being dried in shaded sunlight and then lightly baked at just the right moment. The care required to produce good white tea and the smaller volumes produced mean good white tea can command a premium. Being completely unfermented it is a very delicate and lightly aromatic tea.

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**TASTING TERMINOLOGY**

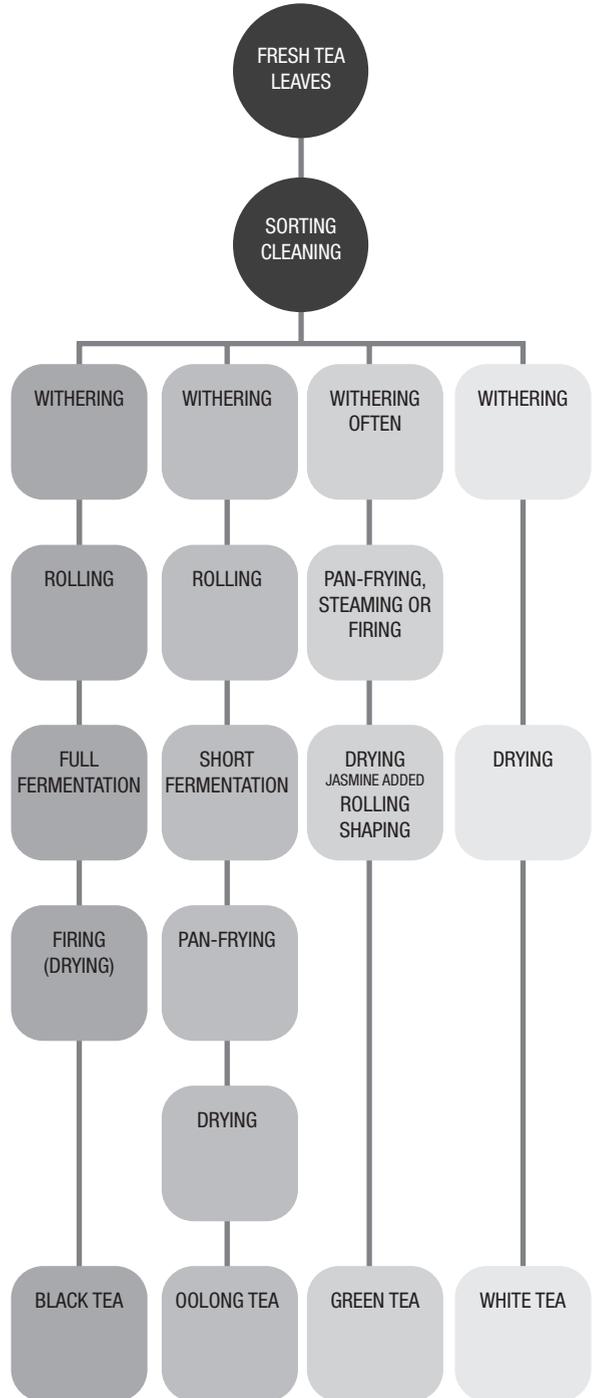
There is a vast vocabulary of tasting terminology which varies depending on the type of tea and cultural practices. The following is a sample of some common terminology used in the Sri Lankan and Indian tea industry:

Body	A liquor possessing fullness and strength
Bright	Denotes a fresh lively tea with good keeping qualities
Character	Attractive taste describing better high elevation growth peculiar to the tea's origin
Dull	Referring to not clear liquor in the cup, lacking brightness or briskness in taste
Old	Having lost most original attributes through age
Pungent	Astringent with a good combination of briskness and brightness
Strength	Substance in the cup

**STORAGE**

To keep tea fresh it must be stored in an airtight container in a cool, dark and dry place after opening to avoid exposure to direct sunlight, moisture or contaminating odours.

**TEA (CAMELLIA SINENSIS) MANUFACTURING CHART**



# COFFEE

The coffee plant is one of the large family of Rubiaceae, genus coffea.

## VARIETIES OF COFFEE

There are three major varieties of coffee, each with its own attributes

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**Coffea arabica** Is the most widely cultivated, producing a bean that is richer, tastier and more aromatic than other varieties. The plant self-pollinates which has the advantage of fewer mutations, but as the thoroughbred of coffee, it requires specific growing conditions.

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**Coffea robusta** As its name implies, is easier to cultivate than arabica. Its disadvantages are that it is not self-pollinating and its flavour is much less strong than arabica. It is cheaper than arabica and so is often blended.

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**Coffea liberica and Coffea excelsa** Are the most hardy coffee plants but their flavour is the least sought after.

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## TASTING COFFEE

There are four categories of 'taste' a coffee taster considers.

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**Acid** Is the tartness felt at the back of the mouth and varies with the origin of the coffee.

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**Body** Is how heavy the coffee feels in the mouth.

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**Aroma** Is the combination of acidity and flavour

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**Flavour** Is described in many ways from distinctive and rich, to chocolatey, earthy and musty or bitter, harsh and bland.

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## TYPES OF COFFEE

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**Espresso Coffee** Is made when a small amount of near boiling water and steam under pressure passes through finely ground and compacted coffee using an espresso machine. Espresso is a thicker coffee than that produced by other methods because a higher concentration of suspended and dissolved solids end up in the beverage.

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**Caffè crema** Is an old name for espresso, or in Switzerland, Austria and some parts of Northern Italy it is a long espresso drink.

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**Caffè Americano** Is an espresso or short black with hot water added on top of the coffee, destroying the crema.

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**Long black** Is made by pouring a double espresso into an equal amount of hot water. The coffee goes on top of the water and therefore keeps the crema.

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**Caffè latte** Is made with espresso and steamed milk generally in a ratio of 1:3 or 1:5 espresso to milk. It has a small amount of foam on top.

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**Cappuccino** Is espresso with equal parts of steamed milk and milk froth. The milk froth or foam is on top and acts as an insulator.

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**Flat white** Originated in New Zealand. Traditionally, it is two shots of espresso topped with milk prepared by folding the top layer of steamed milk into the lower layers to give a flat not frothy texture. Alternatively, steamed milk is poured from the bottom of the jug as the lighter top froth is held back allowing milk with smaller bubbles to top the coffee, producing a smooth, velvety coffee. It has less milk than a caffè latte.

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**Mocha** Is a caffè latte variation usually made with one third espresso, two thirds steamed milk with a portion of chocolate added either as chocolate syrup, instant chocolate powder or solid chocolate pieces.

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**Macchiato** Means stained. Milk is foamed in the cup then espresso coffee is put on top. Alternatively, milk foam can be floated on top of the coffee.

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Our first handbook was produced in 1991, with the purpose of providing a reference tool that in turn would establish standards for New Zealand food writers. In 1999 the handbook was updated to reflect the growing needs of members.

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**KATHY PATERSON, PRESIDENT, 2016**

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