



362 5th AVENUE, SUITE 801, NEW YORK, NY 10001

Telephone: (212) 986-9415  
Fax: (212) 697-8658  
www.teaUSA.org

## Tea Fact Sheet

Tea is the most widely consumed beverage in the world next to water, and can be found in almost all U.S. households. It is the only beverage commonly served hot or iced, anytime, anywhere, for any occasion. On any given day, over 160 million Americans are drinking tea.

- Annual Consumption: (U.S.)** In 2011, Americans consumed well over 65 billion servings of tea, or over 5 billion gallons. About 85% of all tea consumed was Black Tea, 14% was Green Tea, and the remaining amount was Oolong and White Tea. 2011 marked the second consecutive year in which the U.S. imported more tea than did the UK.
- Daily Consumption: (U.S.)** On any given day, about one half of the American population drinks tea. On a regional basis, the South and Northeast have the greatest concentration of tea drinkers.
- Iced Tea Consumption:** Approximately 85% of tea consumed in America is iced.
- Ready-To-Drink Iced Teas:** Over the last 10 years, Ready-To-Drink Tea has grown by more than 17.5 times. In 2011, Ready-To-Drink Tea sales were conservatively estimated at \$3.5 billion.
- Tea Bags, Loose Tea & Iced Tea Mixes:** In 2011, over 65% of the tea brewed in the U.S. was prepared using tea bags. Ready-to-Drink tea and iced tea mix comprises about one fourth of all tea prepared in the U.S., with instant and loose tea accounting for the balance. Instant tea is declining and loose tea is gaining in popularity, especially in Specialty Tea and coffee outlets.
- Current Sales:** 2011 was the 20<sup>th</sup> consecutive year that consumer purchases of tea increased. Retail supermarket sales alone surpassed the \$2.2 billion dollar mark. Away-from-home consumption has been increasing by at least 10% annually over the last decade.

<b>Anticipated Sales: (U.S.)</b>	The industry anticipates strong, continuous growth over the next five years. This growth will come from all segments driven by convenience, interest in the healthy properties of tea, and by the continued discovery of Specialty Tea.
<b>Varieties:</b>	Black, Green, Oolong and White Teas all come from the same plant, a warm-weather evergreen named <i>Camellia sinensis</i> . Differences among the four types of tea result from the various degrees of processing and the level of exposure to air. The length of exposure to air is a key factor in the taste, color and distinguishing characteristics of teas. Black Tea is exposed to air for up to four hours and Oolong Teas are oxidized for two to three hours. Green and White Teas are heated immediately after harvest to stop these processes, resulting in a product that is different in taste and color. Green and White Teas most closely resemble the look and composition of the fresh tea leaf, especially flavonoid composition.
<b>Grown In:</b>	Much of the world's tea is grown in mountainous areas 3,000 – 7,000 feet above sea level, situated between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn in mineral-rich soil. Leading tea-producing countries include Argentina, China, India, Indonesia, Kenya Malawi, Sri Lanka and Tanzania.
<b>History:</b>	<p>Tea is nearly 5,000 years old. It was discovered in 2737 BC by Chinese Emperor Shen-Nung, known as the “Divine Healer” when, as legend goes, some tea leaves accidentally blew into the Emperor’s pot of boiling water.</p> <p>In the 1600s, tea became highly popular throughout Europe and the American colonies. Tea played a dramatic part in the establishment of the United States of America. In 1767 the British Government put a tax on the tea used by American colonists. Protesting this “taxation without representation,” the colonists decided to stop buying tea and refused to allow tea ships to be unloaded. One December night in 1773, men dressed as Native Americans boarded British ships in Boston Harbor and threw more than 300 chests of tea into the sea. This now famous Boston Tea Party, in protest of the British tea tax, was said to be one of the acts leading to the Revolutionary War.</p>

Anna, Duchess of Bedford, is credited with creating *Afternoon Tea* in 1840, when she began taking tea with a light snack around 4:00 p.m. to ward off “that sinking feeling.”

High Tea originated with the rural and working class British, who would return to their homes at about 6:00 p.m. for a meal of potted meats, fish, cheese, salads, sweets and a pot of strong tea. The U.S. played an important role in the history of tea, inventing the tea bag and iced tea, both in 1904. Recently, the U.S. has led the rest of the world in marketing convenient Ready-To-Drink forms of tea in bottles.

**Environmental Qualities:**

Tea is an all-natural and environmentally sound product from a renewable source. The tea plant is naturally resistant to most insects; many tea packers sustainably source their tea and use recycled paper for packaging.

**Cost Per Serving:**

Prepared in the home, tea costs about three cents per serving, cup or glass. Tea remains one of the most economical beverages available.

**Key Tea Terms:**

Antioxidant: A substance that helps prevent or delay oxidative damage caused by reactive oxygen and or reactive nitrogen species. Oxidative damage to the body, cells and tissues may contribute to diseases like cancer and heart disease.

Phytochemicals: Naturally occurring plant compounds, many of which are thought to play a role in decreasing the risk of cancer and heart disease and may boost the immune system.

Flavonoids: A large family of polyphenolic compounds synthesized by plants. They are found among others in tea, wine, cocoa, fruit and vegetables. Tea is the major contributor of flavonoids in the American diet.

Flavanols: A sub-class of flavonoids that accounts for more than 90% of the total flavonoid content in tea. Flavanols include catechins, theaflavins and thearubigins. Epigallocatechin gallate (EGCG) is the primary catechin found in Green and Black Teas, with Green having significantly more than Black.

Flavonols: A sub-class of flavonoids found in tea and many fruits and vegetables that are thought to contribute to some of the potential health benefits in these plant foods. Flavonols include rutin, quercetin and kaempferol.

Theanine: An amino acid almost exclusively found in tea, that has been shown to have psychoactive properties, as it can bind to receptors and transporters involved in glutamate and GABA neurotransmission, and can increase alpha brain activity at rest.

Caffeine: Tea is naturally low in caffeine. A cup of Black Tea, for example, contains about 40 milligrams of caffeine or about half as much as a cup of coffee. Caffeine is known to affect physiological, psychomotor and cognitive performance, as well as mood.

# # #