



FACTS ABOUT TEA THAT EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW

Everyone knows that tea is amazingly good for you. It can regulate your blood sugar levels, balance your hormones and help you sleep soundly at night. Did you know, though, that tea is the second most popular drink on the planet and it's only beaten into first place by water? Legend has it that the joys of drinking tea were only discovered when some tea leaves blew into a Chinese emperor's pot of boiling water by accident and he discovered that he liked the taste. That's just the first of our amazing facts about tea; here are ten more.

1. Tea was stolen by the British from China

Up until the 19th century, nearly all the tea in the world was grown in China and the biggest importer of tea was Great Britain. When trade between China and Great Britain became difficult, the British smuggled tea plants out of China, so they could try and grow it in other countries, like Sri Lanka, India and Kenya. Today, Sri Lanka, India and Kenya are the biggest tea producing countries in the world, but China is still the biggest.

2. Iced tea was invented in a heatwave

America had its first taste of iced tea in 1904, at the World's Fair in St. Louis. A tea merchant named Richard Blechynden was trying in vain to get people to try his tea in the sweltering heat of a heat wave. In a final effort to tempt people into tasting his tea, Blechynden dumped a bucket of ice into his tea and, lo and behold, iced tea was born and became popular.

3. Tea can repair cells in the body

Contrary to popular belief, it's not only green teas that contain high levels of antioxidants, black teas do as well. Black tea contains polyphenols, which can help our bodies fight cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and other illnesses.

4. The teabag was invented by accident

Using teabags is the most popular way of making tea today, but the whole idea of teabags came about completely by accident. In 1904, American tea merchant Thomas Sullivan sent out samples of his tea in silk pouches. Not realising that they were supposed to empty the tea out of the teabags first, customers just put the whole bag into boiling water. When he found out, Sullivan capitalised on this mistake and began selling his tea in teabags.

5. The biggest tea drinking country in the world is the United Arab Emirates

Around three billion cups of teas are consumed throughout the world every single year, but the biggest tea drinkers of all are the people of the United Arab Emirates. Citizens of the UAE get through a staggering 14 pounds of tea each year.

6. Where the word tea comes from

If you ever wondered why it's called tea, then here is the answer. The word tea originates from the Chinese word 'T'e', which is the Amoy dialect word for the plant that tea comes from. In mandarin, the same plant is called 'ch'a', which is where that words chai and cha come from.

7. The most expensive tea in the world will cost you about \$200 per cup

In the mountains of Ya'An, which are in the Sichuan province of China, a unique type of tea is grown that will set you back about \$200 for one cup. The tea is said to be so special because it is fertilised with panda poop, which is extremely high in nutrients, as well as being rather rare.

8. Tea can boost your brain power

There is an ingredient in tea, called L-theanine', that has remarkable effects on the mind. It relaxes the brain, which is why drinking tea can be good for reducing stress, and it also sharpens the mind and boosts the memory, but it doesn't make you sleepy. That's why drinking tea when you are working late would be much better for you than drinking coffee.

9. A lot of effort goes into growing your tea

Tea does grow in the wild, but most of the tea that we drink is farmed. It takes around 2,000 individual tea leaves to make just a single pound of tea and each tea bush needs up to 3 years of growth before its leaves can be harvested.

10. The caffeine in teas is not as bad for you as the caffeine in coffee

Because of the high levels of antioxidants, you are unlikely to have the same caffeine highs and lows that you will get from coffee, because the antioxidants regulate the body's absorption of the caffeine. Once brewed, a cup of tea contains only about a third of the caffeine that a cup of coffee does, depending on how strong you make your tea.