



The China Tea Book

By Luo Jialin

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Tea isn't just a drink—the cup you hold in your hands is steeped in more than five thousand years of history and it all began in China. A lavishly illustrated chronicle of the world's most popular beverage (second only to water), *The China Tea Book* covers everything from the leaves to the pervasive culture they spawned.

Kettle-boiled tea in the Tang Dynasty, powdered tea during the Song, pressed cake in the Ming—the history of tea is as diverse as the varietals themselves. Whether green, oolong, or black, each tea has a unique personality, which *The China Tea Book* captures in photographs and facts. As the trade of tea took off in the 16th century, the associated health benefits and cultural expressions spread around the world. The etiquette of tea drinking and the art of tea brewing may be centuries old, but understanding them leads to a deeper appreciation of the now ubiquitous drink. Designed for leisurely reading yet eminently practical, *The China Tea Book* is sure to enchant Chinophiles and tea-lovers alike.

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Editorial Review

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This elegant, pictorial introduction to the ways and “wise” of tea in China, by a Beijing-based tea-making master teaming with photographer Han Zheng, gracefully draws the English-speaking reader into the manufacture, presentation, and cultural surroundings of these fragrant leaves, in the process steeping us in information and appreciation. We learn about the four different tea varieties—green, oolong, black, and pu-erh—and their properties, best brewing methods, arts associated with tea culture (calligraphy, painting, and poetry), tea drinking’s relationship to Zen, and even how tea was disseminated along the “Ancient Tea Route.” Obviously, a rivalry with Japan exists: the author insists that China originated tea and Japan simply imitated the practice. But he realizes contemporary differences between the two, with Japan focused on the drink’s spiritual expression and China on the actual drink. This book’s pleasurable reading experience reflects the pleasure of tea drinking. --Barbara Jacobs

About the Author

Luo Jialin holds an MFA from Peking University and is currently a visiting scholar at the University of Ljubljana of Slovenia. An expert in tea ceremony, he won certification as the tea-making master from Taiwan Luyu Tea Culture Institute. He lives in Beijing, China.

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