

What is Green Tea?

Green [tea](#) products have become increasingly common on the market today. Used for thousands of years in both China and Japan, green [tea](#) is reputed to provide major [health](#) benefits.

Green tea comes from a tea [plant](#) native to Asia called Camellia sinensis. Black tea also comes from this same plant. What makes green tea different, and green, is not the plant used to make the tea, but how the plant is processed. Green [teas](#) are the least processed of commercial teas and the method used preserves more of the [nutrients](#) and health benefits.

Green tea leaves are picked and then immediately fired, a tea processing term which means the leaves are either steamed or heated. The tea leaves are then dried and prepared for either sale or further processing. Other teas are picked, dried by a process commonly called "withering", rolled or broken which induces [oxidation](#), and then dried. Oxidation removes most of the necessary [nutritional](#) values from the tea and then the leaves are dried to halt oxidation. Oxidized teas are called black teas and most of the tea we drink in the Western hemisphere is considered black tea. Because of the process used to make black tea, most of the [antioxidants](#) that are proven to provide health benefits are removed which is why green tea, still [antioxidant](#) rich, is considered healthier.

Black teas have the characteristic brown color when brewed that many associate with tea. Green tea, however, has a much lighter hue and [flavor](#) due to the minimal processing.

Many people believe green tea to have curative effects. Recent studies indicate that the green teas contain powerful antioxidants that do boost health and the [immune system](#). The American Cancer Society has studied the benefits of green tea to both prevent and treat cancer. Other studies indicate that green tea may ward off or slow [Alzheimer's disease](#). Many believe that green teas are an effective aid in [weight loss](#) and others believe green teas offer benefits for arthritic patients.

Green teas are available in leaf form, in tea bags, in nutritional supplements, and as prepared beverages. Detailed information is available from a variety of sources. Check with a medical professional, an [herbalist](#), or look in bookstores for complete information about the proven and perceived benefits of green tea.