

A Tea Primer

All teas come from the same plant, *Camellia sinensis*, but that doesn't mean they're all the same; how the leaves are processed determines the type and taste. Here's our guide.

TEA	FLAVOR	BENEFITS	CAFFEINE	PROCESS
BLACK	Ranges from bold and smoky to heady and floral.	Has the strongest association with reducing cardiovascular-disease risk.	About 40 grams per cup after steeping for 3–5 minutes (about half the amount in drip coffee).	Leaves are completely oxidized (exposed to the air), which turns them black.
OOLONG	Somewhere between the tastes of black and green teas, with grassy, fruity, and floral notes.	Research links it with the health properties of black and green teas.	About 30 grams per cup after steeping 2–4 minutes.	Leaves are partially oxidized.
GREEN	Varies from rich and earthy to sweet and herbaceous.	Its power lies primarily in fighting various cancers.	About 20 grams per cup after steeping for 1–2 minutes.	Leaves are steamed or pan-cooked to prevent oxidation, keeping the natural green color.
WHITE	Delicate and almost sweet.	It's the least processed, so some researchers believe it may have more antioxidants than other teas.	Amount is similar to that in green tea (see above).	Leaves are flash-steamed.
RED "TEA"	This is not a true tea; it's actually a mildly sweet herb from South Africa.	Its high antioxidant content may help reduce cell damage that can lead to disease.	None.	Often flavored or blended with real tea.