

The history of

Tea

2737 B.C.

According to Chinese legend, tea was invented accidentally by the Chinese Emperor Shen Nong when leaves of the *Camellia sinensis* plant drifted into a heated open pot of water.

59 B.C.

Wang Bao wrote the first known book with instructions on buying and preparing tea.

22 C.E.

Famed physician and surgeon Hua Tuo wrote *Shen Lun*, in which he describes tea's ability to improve mental functions.

400-600 C.E.

The demand for tea rose steadily. Rather than harvest leaves from wild trees, farmers began to develop ways to cultivate tea.

479 C.E.

Turkish traders bartered for tea on the Mongolian border.

589-618 C.E.

During the Sui Dynasty, tea was introduced to Japan by Buddhist monks.

618-906 C.E.

During the Tang Dynasty, powdered tea was produced. Caravans carried tea on the Silk Road, trading with India, Turkey, and Russia.

780 C.E.

Poet Lu Yu wrote the first book of tea, making him a living saint, patronized by the Emperor himself. The book described methods of cultivation and preparation.

1200-1500

1206-1368

During the Yuan Dynasty, tea became an ordinary drink, never retaining the high status it once enjoyed in China. Marco Polo was not even introduced to tea when he visited.

1211

In Japan, Eisai wrote a small book on tea, elevating its popularity further.

1368-1644



During the Ming Dynasty, Chinese people began to enjoy tea again. The new method of preparation was steeping whole leaves in water.

1422-1502

The Japanese tea ceremony was created by a Zen priest named Murata Shuko, who had devoted his life to tea. The ceremony is called *Cha No Yu*, which means "hot water for tea."

1600

1610

The Dutch brought tea to Europe from China, trading dried sage in exchange.

1636

Tea became known in France.

1657

Tea was first sold in England at Garney's Coffee House in London.

1661

The Taiwanese began to drink wild tea.

1662

Charles II took Catherine Braganza of Portugal as his wife. They both drank tea, creating a fashion for it. Its popularity among the aristocracy causes alcohol beverages to fall from favour.

1669

Close to 150 pounds of tea were shipped to England.

1689

Traders with three hundred camels travelled 11,000 miles to China and back in order to supply Russia's demand. The trip took sixteen months.

1679

In Taiwan, settlers of Formosa's Nantou county cultivated the first domestic bushes. Dutch ships carried the tea to Fuzhou, the first known export of Taiwanese tea.

1700

1705

The yearly importation of tea to England grew to approximately 800,000 pounds.

1710

Wealthy American Colonists developed a taste for tea.

1733

The Boston Tea Party, protesting high taxes that England levied on tea, led to the American colonies' fight for independence. Under cover of night, colonists dressed as Native Americans boarded East India Company ships in Boston Harbour. They opened chests of tea and dumped their contents into the water. This was repeated in other less known instances up and down the coast.

1776

England sent the first opium to China. Opium addiction in China funded the opium demand for tea in England. Cash trade for the drug increased until the opium wars began in 1839.

1800

1834

An Imperial Edict from the Chinese Emperor closed all Chinese ports to foreign vessels until the end of the First Opium War.

1835

The East India Company established experimental tea plantations in Assam, India.

1840's

Copper ships, built in America, sped up the transportation of tea to America and Europe. America's first tea plantation, Sunnyside, made the tea from Hong Kong to London in only five days. However, London became a contraband; smugglers and blockade runners also benefited from the advances in sailing speeds.

1856

Tea was planted in many areas of Darjeeling.

1857

Tea plantations were started in Ceylon, though their tea would not be exported until the 1870's.

1869

A deadly fungus wiped out the coffee crop in Ceylon, shifting preference from coffee to tea.

1869

The Suez Canal opened, making the trip to China shorter and more economical by steamship.

1870

Twinings of England began to blend tea for consistency.

1900-2000

1900

Trans-Siberian railroad made transport to Russia cheaper and faster. Java became an important producer as well.

1904

Richard Blechynden created iced tea for the St. Louis World Fair.

1908

Thomas Sullivan invented tea bags in New York, sending tea to clients in silk bags which they began to mistakenly steep without opening.

1910

Sumatra, Indonesia grows and exports tea. Soon thereafter, tea is grown in Kenya and other parts of Africa.

1953

World's first instant tea is introduced.

1970

The Taiwanese government encouraged its population to drink tea, reviving tea culture on the island.

1987

An Indian multinational non-alcoholic beverages company set up a fully owned subsidiary, Tata Tea Inc., in the USA.

1993-2008

The American specialty tea market has quadrupled, now being worth \$6.8 billion a year.

2012

Tea is grown and produced in more than 40 countries worldwide. Every year, more than 2.5 million tons of tea is produced around the world.