Don Mei (Mei Leaf): The Gongfu Educator

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **The short version:** Don Mei of Mei Leaf taught a generation to brew gongfu online. What he is known for, the commercial caveat, and who his approach suits.

For a generation of online learners, Mei Leaf is how they learned to brew properly. You will find it among the tea people pages, alongside the best tea YouTubers.

Last reviewed by the teas.co.uk team in February 2026.

This profile draws on public information and Don Mei's own published work, and is accurate as of May 2026. Nothing private and no made up quotes; we cover his role and reputation, not gossip.

Strengths and caveats

Strengths	Caveats to keep in mind
Clear, structured gongfu teaching for beginners	He sells the tea he teaches with: a commercial overlap to weigh
Made an inaccessible method learnable for ordinary drinkers	An enthusiast register; enthusiasm can read as advocacy
Consistent emphasis on technique over gadgets	Strong house preferences; treat as a viewpoint, not the only one
Raised the baseline of online brewing advice	Premium framing; not aimed at the bargain-led buyer

What he is known for

Don Mei is the front figure of Mei Leaf, a London-based tea company, and the presenter of its widely followed YouTube channel, one of the most popular tea-education resources online. Through it he is one of the people most responsible for a generation of English-speaking drinkers learning to brew properly rather than badly. The contribution is real education: accessible, structured, enthusiastic teaching of gongfu style brewing, the small vessel, short, repeated infusion method that gets far more out of good leaf than a single Western mug. Before content like this existed, gongfu was largely shut away in specialist circles and a few books; making it watchable and repeatable lowered the barrier dramatically. See gongfu brewing.

Who it suits

His approach suits anyone moving from bags to loose leaf, the gaiwan and gongfu, who wants a structured, repeatable way into brewing good leaf well, especially beginners who have been let down by expensive tea brewed carelessly. It suits a value-led buyer less, because the framing is firmly premium. None of that makes the teaching wrong; it is a strong viewpoint to learn the method from while keeping your own judgement on what to buy. See the gaiwan explained.

Educator or marketer? How to vet any tea authority

Mei Leaf is a brand channel, so it sells the tea it teaches with, and our reading is that the education is strong and the commercial interest is openly part of it. The useful, transferable skill is telling an educator from a marketer when the same person is visibly both. Split what they offer into two streams. Method, how to weigh leaf, control temperature, choose a vessel, time a steep and taste across infusions, is testable in your own cup and brand-independent, so learn it. Recommendation, which specific teas and which supplier, is where a commercial interest sits, so keep your own judgement. The quickest test: take one technique and try it on leaf from an unrelated supplier; if the cup is still better, the teaching was real. See best tea YouTubers.

Want to actually buy a good one?

If his approach suits you, the next step is good leaf bought for the cup it makes, not the name on the tin. The teas shown here were matched to the gongfu theme of this page, so they are the sensible place to start. To see the wider range, browse tea and herbal infusions at teas.co.uk or the full tea shop. As on every wiki page, the cup and the description matter most, so weigh the cost of a cup, and enjoy free UK delivery on orders over £35.

Reference noted

- PubMed: Green tea catechins and human health

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · Begin with modest leaf and keep it modest until something stops you. Most rich teas reward patience, not budget.

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