

# Bancha: Japan's Everyday Green Tea

From the Teas.co.uk wiki

**Bancha, in summary:** A mellow, economical everyday Japanese green tea from later harvests, lower in caffeine than sencha, and the base leaf for both hojicha and genmaicha.

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for Bancha: Japan's Everyday Green Tea. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/bancha-explained/>*

Bancha is Japan's humble everyday green tea. It sits in the roasted-tea cluster beside [kukicha](#).

*Last reviewed by the teas.co.uk team in April 2026.*

## What bancha is

Bancha is green tea from later harvests and coarser leaf than sencha: the everyday, economical Japanese cup. It tastes mellow, mild and slightly rustic, low in bitterness and easygoing rather than refined. It is not failed sencha but a different, sensible intention, and the coarser, later-picked leaf is exactly why it is gentle and forgiving. Understanding it is worth the few minutes, because the same leaf is the backbone of two far more famous teas. For where it fits in the wider picture, see [green tea](#).

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### Bancha

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| What     | Japanese green tea from later harvests and coarser leaf than sencha |
| Taste    | Mellow, mild, slightly rustic, low bitterness                       |
| Caffeine | Lower than first flush sencha (later harvest leaf)                  |
| Role     | The base for hojicha (roasted) and genmaicha (with rice)            |
| Brew     | Hot but not boiling, short steep; very forgiving                    |
| Best for | Inexpensive, mellow, lower caffeine everyday green                  |

## The base for hojicha and genmaicha

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for The base for hojicha and genmaicha , Bancha: Japan's Everyday Green Tea. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/bancha-explained/>*

Bancha sits at the start of a small family defined by what is done to the leaf after picking. On its own it is a mellow, low-bitterness green. Roast it hard and the grassy character converts into the nutty, caramel warmth of [hojicha](#). Blend it with toasted rice and you get genmaicha. The flavour change in hojicha is intrinsic to roasted bancha, not a flavouring added on top, which is why understanding bancha explains the whole roasted Japanese corner at once. The same logic runs through the [genmaicha](#) and [kukicha](#) guides: harvest timing, leaf coarseness and post-harvest processing are the levers, and bancha is simply the later, lower-caffeine, deliberately economical setting.

## How much caffeine bancha has

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](#). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for How much caffeine bancha has*, *Bancha: Japan's Everyday Green Tea*. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/bancha-explained/>

Bancha is widely sold as "low caffeine", and that is broadly fair but not absolute. Later-harvest leaf carries less caffeine than first-flush sencha or matcha, but it is still true tea, *Camellia sinensis*, so it contains caffeine. Lower is clear; caffeine-free it is not, so anyone needing genuinely zero caffeine should reach for a herbal tisane rather than a green tea. As a gentler evening choice within real tea, though, it is a sensible one. See [caffeine in tea](#) for the detail.

## Brewing it

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](#). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Brewing it*, *Bancha: Japan's Everyday Green Tea*. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/bancha-explained/>

Bancha is one of the easiest greens to get right, because later, coarser leaf carries less of the delicate astringency that punishes careless brewing. Hot but not boiling water and a short steep give a clean, mellow cup, and it is genuinely hard to ruin. That forgiveness, plus the lower caffeine, is precisely why it is the Japanese everyday and gentle-evening cup rather than a connoisseur showpiece. Buy it fresh, brew it off the boil and short, and it rewards the small care it asks. See [ideal water temperatures](#).

## Common questions

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](#). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Common questions*, *Bancha: Japan's Everyday Green Tea*. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/bancha-explained/>

**Is bancha just cheap sencha?** No, it is a different intention: later, coarser leaf for a mellow, economical everyday cup, not a lesser version of fine sencha.

**Is it caffeine free?** No, lower not zero. Later-harvest leaf reduces caffeine, but it is still true tea. For zero, choose a tisane.

**Why does it matter for hojicha and genmaicha?** Both are built on bancha, roasted or blended with rice, so understanding bancha explains both at once.

**How do I brew it?** Hot but not boiling water and a short steep. It is forgiving and hard to ruin, which is part of its everyday appeal.

## Reference noted

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Reference noted*, *Bancha: Japan's Everyday Green Tea*. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/bancha-explained/>

- [EFSA Scientific Opinion on the Safety of Caffeine \(2015\)](#)

If this piece pointed you somewhere, these are the obvious places to land: [English Breakfast](#), [Earl Grey](#), [green tea](#), [loose leaf tea](#), [Darjeeling](#), [oolong](#), and [herbal tea](#). Have a wander through the [tea range](#); UK delivery is on the house above £35.

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## Japanese-tea reading

- [Hojicha](#)
- [Genmaicha](#)
- [Kukicha twig tea](#)
- [Sencha](#)
- [Green tea reference](#)
- [Japanese tea hub](#)

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