# Anji Bai Cha: The Green Tea That Sounds White

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Anji Bai Cha, in summary:** Anji Bai Cha is a green tea, not a white tea. The name refers to a pale early-spring cultivar that gives an extraordinary natural sweetness and low bitterness, so brew it cool and short like the delicate green it is.

Anji Bai Cha is the tea whose name causes more confusion than almost any other, and clearing it up is the most useful thing this page can do. "Bai Cha" means "white tea", but Anji Bai Cha is not white tea at all, it is a green tea, processed exactly like other green teas. The "white" refers to the unusually pale, almost jade-white young leaves of a specific cultivar, not to the white-tea processing category. Calling it white tea is a translation trap, and a clear guide names that trap immediately.

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

## What Anji Bai Cha actually is

It is a pan-fired, dry-finished green tea from Anji county in Zhejiang, made from a special cultivar (often called Bai Ye No. 1) whose spring shoots emerge unusually pale because they are temporarily low in chlorophyll. Crucially, those pale shoots are exceptionally high in amino acids, especially the sweet, savoury L-theanine, and relatively low in bitter catechins during that brief pale phase. The result is a green tea with a remarkable natural sweetness and a smooth, almost broth-like umami, with very little of the astringency people associate with green tea.

## Why the pale cultivar matters

This is the really interesting core. The pale colour is not a processing choice or a defect; it is a natural, temperature-dependent feature of the Bai Ye cultivar in early spring, directly linked to the high amino-acid content that makes the tea so sweet. As the season warms the leaves green up and the special character fades, so authentic Anji Bai Cha is a narrow early-spring product. It reaches the same outcome as the shaded Japanese greens, high amino acids, low bitterness, sweetness and umami, by a different mechanism: a pale cultivar here rather than shading.

## Where it sits in Chinese green

Chinese green tea is overwhelmingly one processing family, pan-fired (dry-heat fixed) green, varied by region, cultivar and picking rather than by fundamentally different methods, the master idea the Chinese

green tea and pan-firing guides set out. Anji Bai Cha's distinctiveness is the cultivar dial, not a different category: where Bi Luo Chun is defined by downy early picking and other greens by shaping or scenting, Anji is defined by a pale, amino-rich Bai Ye leaf. Place it on that map and its sweetness stops being mysterious and becomes a predictable position you can taste and brew.

## Naming and sourcing caution

Two cautions follow. First, do not buy it expecting white tea, mellow, dried, un-fired, because you will get a (lovely) green tea instead and feel misled if no one explained the name. Second, because it is famous and briefly seasonal, the name is over applied, and real Anji Bai Cha is geographically specific and picked early, so buy from candid sellers and judge the cup for that hallmark clean sweetness and pale leaf. The cluster-wide rule holds: the name signals an intended thing, the cup proves it.

## How to brew it well

Treat it as the delicate sweet green it is, not as white tea. Cool water around 75 to 80C, a short steep and gentle handling protect the sweetness and umami; boiling water or a long steep pushes even this naturally low-bitterness tea toward harshness and wastes its whole point. The pale, needle-like leaves are also lovely in a glass, and it re-steeps a few times, the first infusion usually the sweetest.

## Is Anji Bai Cha good for you

As a real green tea, it follows the usual pattern of caffeine and catechins with no miracle attached, plus one real and specific point: the pale cultivar makes it unusually high in L theanine. That is a real compositional fact and a reasonable basis for its smooth character, not a superpower or proof that it does more for you. The real reward is its extraordinary natural sweetness, one of the most distinctive cups in Chinese green tea.

## Anji Bai Cha at a glance

| Anji Bai Cha | |
|---|---|
| Category | Green tea (not white, despite the name) |
| Origin | Anji county, Zhejiang, China |
| Cultivar | Bai Ye No. 1; pale spring shoots, low chlorophyll |
| Character | Remarkably sweet, smooth, almost broth-like umami, low astringency |
| Why | Pale shoots are unusually high in L-theanine, low in bitter catechins |
| Brew | 75 to 80C, short steep; re-steeps a few times |

The one idea to carry away is that the name says white but the tea is green, sweetened by a pale cultivar rather than by any unusual processing. Browse the wider green tea family, a delicate Chinese green, the loose leaf range, or the full tea shop.

Teas in the related corner of the range: English Breakfast, Earl Grey, green tea, loose leaf tea, Darjeeling, oolong, and herbal tea. The rest of the tea shop is here, and UK shipping is free over £35.

FROM THE CURATOR

*teas* · Anji or not, drink what you like over what the shelf pushes. Curiosity is the only reliable guide.

### More from the tea wiki

- The history of tea
- Loose leaf vs teabag
- Tea tasting for beginners
- Tea and caffeine
- Green tea
- Tea storage
- Tea ethics and sustainability


## Earn rewards on teas.co.uk

Earn loyalty points on every order. Free to join.

**+100 pts**

**Create your free account**

Welcome bonus + earn on every order.



**100 pts = 1 tree**

**Plant a tree in Scotland**

Pledge points to our reforestation partner.



teas.co.uk · Tunbridge Wells, Kent · hello@teas.co.uk · 3-click cancel at teas.co.uk/cancel/