

# Golden Monkey Tea: The Name Is Folklore, Not a Grade

From the Teas.co.uk wiki

**Golden Monkey, in summary:** Golden Monkey is a tippy, golden-bud Chinese black tea, honeyed and smooth. The charming name is descriptive folklore, not a grade, so judge it by origin, manufacture and the cup.

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for Golden Monkey Tea: The Name Is Folklore, Not a Grade. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/golden-monkey-tea/>*

Golden Monkey is one of the more charmingly named Chinese black teas, and the single most useful fact is that the name is descriptive folklore, not a grade or a guarantee: it refers to a tippy, golden-budded black tea whose curved, downy buds were fancifully likened to little golden monkey paws. Knowing the name describes appearance and a style, not a certified quality level, is the first step to buying it sensibly.

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

## What Golden Monkey actually is

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for What Golden Monkey actually is , Golden Monkey Tea: The Name Is Folklore, Not a Grade. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/golden-monkey-tea/>*

It is a Chinese black tea, traditionally associated with Fujian and Yunnan, made with a high proportion of golden tips and young leaves, fully oxidised. The cup is smooth, sweet and gentle, with honey, cocoa, malt and sometimes a soft peppery or fruity note, and very little of the brisk astringency of Indian breakfast blacks. It is prized as an approachable, naturally sweet black tea that needs no milk, in the same broad family of tippy Chinese blacks as [Dian Hong](#).

## What the name really means

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"Golden Monkey" (Jin Hou) is essentially a poetic trade name for a tippy, golden-bud black tea style, applied by different producers to teas of varying origin and quality. The golden tips are a genuine signal of bud-rich plucking, which correlates with the smooth sweetness the tea is bought for, but the name itself is not a regulated grade, so two "Golden Monkey" teas can differ considerably. As everywhere in this family, the tippy name is a style hint and the cup is the proof.

## How it relates to Dian Hong

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for How it relates to Dian Hong , Golden Monkey Tea: The Name Is Folklore, Not a Grade. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/golden-monkey-tea/>*

Golden Monkey overlaps heavily with the Dian Hong and tippy Chinese black family in character, smooth, sweet, honeyed, low in astringency, bud-rich, and the names are sometimes used loosely or interchangeably in Western markets. Decoded, it is a tippy, orthodox, golden-bud Chinese black, typically from Fujian or Yunnan, and that description, not the monkey, tells you it will be honeyed and best without milk. Its close kinship with [Yunnan black](#) is the clearest illustration: the same broad idea, a different garden and emphasis, predictable once you read the leaf rather than the legend.

## How to brew it well

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for How to brew it well , Golden Monkey Tea: The Name Is Folklore, Not a Grade. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/golden-monkey-tea/>*

Treat it as a fine, smooth, tippy black tea. Water hot but not a hard rolling boil (around 90 to 95C) and a moderate steep bring out the honey and malt; over-hot, over-long brewing coarsens the delicate golden-bud sweetness. It is best without milk so its natural sweetness shows, and good Golden Monkey re-steeps several times in a small pot, giving evolving sweet infusions in the gongfu manner rather than one strong mug. The commonest disappointment is buying it expecting a robust breakfast mug, brewing it like one with boiling water and a long stew, and concluding it is thin; a thirty-second adjustment, cooler water, shorter steep, no milk, unlocks the tea most people enjoy immediately.

## Is Golden Monkey good for you

It is true black tea, so the story is the standard one: caffeine, polyphenols, hydration, no miracle. The golden tips and gentle sweetness are flavour and plucking facts, not health ones, and any wellness framing is the usual marketing. The genuine reward is an approachable, naturally sweet, charmingly named black tea, best understood as part of the tippy Chinese black family and bought on the cup rather than the name.

## Golden Monkey at a glance

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**Aspect**

**The read**

What it is	A tippy Chinese (Fujian or Yunnan) black tea
The name	Descriptive folklore, not a grade or guarantee
Against Dian Hong	Close relative; both golden-bud Chinese blacks
Taste	Honeyed, smooth, low astringency; drink milkless
Brew	Just off the boil, short, re-steepable

The whole lesson is that the monkey is folklore and the cup is chemistry: decode the name into origin and method, brew it gently and milkless, and Golden Monkey is a genuinely approachable Chinese black rather than a mystery, the eyes-open standard the wider [black tea](#) guide applies. The [CTC versus orthodox](#) guide covers the manufacture axis, and you can buy a good one in the full [tea shop](#).

## Reference noted

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

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