Fuzhou jasmine tea: where jasmine tea comes from

From the teas.co.uk wiki

Fuzhou, the capital of Fujian province on China's south-east coast, is the historic home of jasmine tea. Tea grows on the hills, jasmine grows on the warm flat land by the river, and the two have been brought together there for centuries. In 2014 the FAO recognised Fuzhou's jasmine and tea culture system as a Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System. FAO: Fuzhou jasmine tea

How the tea is actually scented

Jasmine does not grow on tea bushes, and good jasmine tea is not made by mixing dried flowers into dried leaves. It is made by **scenting**, which is closer to a perfumer's job than a blender's:

1. Green tea is made in spring and stored, dried and ready.
2. Jasmine blossoms are picked in high summer, in the afternoon, as tight buds.
3. In the evening, as the buds begin to open and release their perfume, the flowers are layered with the tea.
4. The tea absorbs the aroma overnight. In the morning the spent flowers are sieved out and the tea is dried again.
5. The whole process is repeated with fresh flowers: three times for an everyday tea, up to nine for the finest.

Each round costs another batch of flowers and another drying, which is why scenting rounds are the main thing separating a cheap jasmine tea from an expensive one. Fujian provincial account of the craft

Why loose petals are not a quality sign

In traditionally scented tea the flowers are removed: their job is done once the aroma has transferred. A few petals are sometimes left in, or added back, for appearance.

So visible flowers tell you very little. A tea with no petals at all can be beautifully scented, and a tea full of dried blossom can be a cheap base with flavouring sprayed on. Read the ingredients: "green tea, jasmine flowers" is scented tea; "green tea, jasmine flavouring" is flavoured tea. Our jasmine tea explained page goes into the grades.

What to look for when buying

On the label	What it means
Fuzhou, Fujian	The classic origin for scenting

On the label	What it means
Number of scentings	More rounds, deeper and rounder aroma
Base tea named (e.g. mao feng, silver needle)	You know what you are drinking under the flowers
Harvest year	Jasmine tea fades; fresher is better
"Jasmine flavouring" in the ingredients	Flavoured, not scented

How to brew it

Use water at about 80°C, not boiling: jasmine tea is green tea underneath, and boiling water scorches it and turns the perfume harsh. Allow 2 to 3 minutes for a mug, less for a small pot with more leaf, and take the leaves out when the time is up.

For an everyday cup, Twinings Jasmine Green Tea is a bagged jasmine-scented green tea. Full method in how to brew jasmine tea; for the rolled style, see jasmine pearls.

Common questions

Is all jasmine tea from Fuzhou?
No. It is also made in Guangxi and elsewhere in China, and jasmine-flavoured teas are produced worldwide. Fuzhou is the traditional home of the craft.

Is jasmine tea always green tea?
Usually, but not always. Jasmine-scented black, white and oolong teas exist.

Does jasmine tea contain caffeine?
Yes, the base is real tea. Only a flower-only infusion would be caffeine-free.

Why does my jasmine tea taste soapy?
Usually too much leaf, water that was too hot, or a heavily flavoured product. See why jasmine tea tastes soapy.

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