# Jesse Appell, Jesse's Tea House

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **In one line:** Jesse Appell teaches Chinese tea on YouTube to English-language audiences with on-location farm reporting and gongfu brewing demos.

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

**Jesse's Tea House is the most watched gateway drug for Western tea curiosity. Run by Jesse Appell, an American comedian who fell down the Chinese tea rabbit hole and never climbed back out, the YouTube channel has done more to introduce English speaking audiences to gongfu, pu erh, and proper Chinese tea culture than any other single source.** Jesse lives in China, speaks fluent Mandarin, films at tea farms most Western buyers never visit, and explains the deepest end of tea in a tone that's the opposite of pretentious. If you've ever watched a tea video and thought "oh, this is actually for me," there's a good chance Jesse made it.

This entry covers who Jesse is, why his channel matters, what he gets right that most Western tea content gets wrong, and how to use his videos to skill up if you're new to Chinese tea.

## Who Jesse Appell is

Jesse Appell is an American comedian turned tea importer based in Fuding, Fujian Province, China. He moved to China originally to study Chinese stand up comedy on a Fulbright scholarship; he stayed because of tea. He runs **Jesse's Tea House** as a YouTube channel and a small batch tea importer business, working directly with farmers and tea masters in regions most Western buyers will never set foot in.

The Jesse formula: turn up at a tea farm, drink whatever the farmer pours, play dumb and ask incredibly basic questions, translate the farmer's answers, drink more tea, joke about how much tea he's had, repeat. Behind the comedy is real deep knowledge, he's been doing this since the mid-2010s, has tasted tea most British drinkers will never see, and is one of a handful of native English speaking tea people the Chinese tea industry actually trusts.

## Why the channel matters

Most Western tea content is one of three things: corporate marketing pretending to be education (boring), pretentious connoisseur gatekeeping ("you can't possibly understand without 20 years of study"), or absolute beginner tutorials that never go anywhere ("here's how to use a tea bag"). Jesse hits the sweet spot, he assumes you're smart, he respects your curiosity, and he never pretends tea is more complicated than it is.

Specific things Jesse does that most tea YouTubers don't:

- **Films at the source.** If he's reviewing Wuyi rock oolong, he's standing in a Wuyi tea field. If it's pu erh, he's at a Yunnan ancient tree garden. The footage alone is worth the subscription.
- **Talks to actual farmers.** Not tea bloggers, not importers, not "tea masters" with no farming experience. The people who pluck the leaf.
- **Gives you the trade economics version.** What does a farmer actually earn for a kilo of premium leaf? What's the markup at a Western retailer? Real numbers.
- **Shows you the dud teas too.** He'll pour something mediocre and tell you it's mediocre. Most tea YouTubers can't or won't.
- **Stays funny.** Tea content is full of self serious experts. Jesse's stand up training shows.

### What to watch first if you're new

The Jesse's Tea House catalogue is enormous and growing. Sensible starter playlists:

- **Pu erh basics:** the "what even is pu erh and why does it cost £5,000 for a cake" videos. Pu erh is one of the most mystified categories in tea; Jesse demystifies it without dumbing it down. See also our pu erh overview.
- **Gongfu brewing tutorials:** the multi infusion small pot Chinese style. Jesse's tutorials are the friendliest gongfu intros on the internet. See our loose leaf brewing guide for the Western friendly version.
- **Farm visits:** you don't need a buying agenda to enjoy these. Watching farmers explain their tea is the closest most of us will get to actually being there.
- **Cup and cup comparisons** "is this £200 tea actually better than this £40 tea?" The real answers are usually more interesting than the prices suggest.

### Why we send people his way

teas.co.uk is curated mass market British tea retail. Jesse's Tea House is small batch Chinese specialty tea direct from named producers. Different end of the market, different audience overlap, but enormous mutual respect for the same thing, namely *tea is good and people should drink more of it*. If you've come through our site for the everyday cup and developed a curiosity about the deeper end, Jesse is who we'd send you to.

Specifically: if you've enjoyed our tieguanyin overview, our Da Hong Pao overview, or our silver needle write up, Jesse has filmed at the actual farms producing all three. Watch his videos, then come back here and the leaves you brew will taste different.

### Where to find him (with our compliments)

Subscribe to the channel and the importing business directly:

- **YouTube:** youtube.com/@jessesteahouse, the main channel, hundreds of videos, weekly uploads
- **Tea shop:** jessesteahouse.com, small batch direct from Fuding Chinese tea

- **Social:** @jessesteahouse on Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter/X

Jesse, if you're reading this because we showed up in a Google alert: thanks for everything you've done for English language Chinese tea education. We're a curated mass market British tea retailer, you're a small batch Chinese specialty importer; different rooms, same building. If we ever overlap with a customer, we'll send them your way for the deep end stuff. Drop us a line at hello@teas.co.uk if you ever want to swap a sample.

The British retail equivalent would be Mei Leaf in London (see our Don Mei deep dive), a similar approach, different geography. If you're seriously interested in Chinese tea beyond what mainstream British retail stocks, both are worth following.

## Our take

We aim to sell all tea, and we look forward to working with Jesse in the future. If British everyday tea is the front door to your tea life, Jesse's content is what's behind the door labelled *"down the rabbit hole"*. Watch a couple of his farm visits, see if it grabs you. If it doesn't, Yorkshire Tea Original is still excellent. If it does, your tea cupboard is about to get a lot more interesting, and Jesse's the perfect person to take you there.

His tone, funny, knowledgeable, never gatekeeping, is the model we try to write in here on the Tea Wiki. If you like ours, you'll love his. If you love his, you'll find ours easier going than most British retail tea content.

*For the wider context see the Don Mei / Mei Leaf overview, the Wu Mountain Tea overview, the pu erh tea overview, the oolong tea overview, the tieguanyin overview, the Da Hong Pao overview, the silver needle white overview, and the loose leaf brewing guide.*

## What you need to know: Jesse Appell, Jesse's Tea House

| Field | Detail |
|---|---|
| Best known for | English-language Chinese tea education on YouTube, on-location farm reporting in Fujian and Yunnan |
| Tea categories most-covered | Wuyi yancha, sheng pu-erh, Anji bai cha, dragonwell, dancong oolong |
| Style | Approachable, gongfu-style brewing, Mandarin-speaking field interviews |
| UK relevance | Where to start if you want Chinese tea explained without jargon or gatekeeping |

## Why he matters to a UK drinker

The British tea cupboard tends to stop at English Breakfast, Earl Grey and a green tea bag. Jesse Appell's catalogue of free YouTube content is the cheapest passport into the Chinese tea world the cupboard never explains. He brews on camera, he visits the farms, he speaks the language with the producers, and he subtitles the lot. For a drinker who is curious about why a sheng pu-erh from 2008 tastes different from a sheng pu-erh from 2018, this is the obvious first stop.

## What to taste alongside

Jesse Appell's teaching focuses on Chinese tea categories most British drinkers never meet. To follow the curriculum from your own kitchen, start with a quality Anji Bai Cha green tea for the spring-green Zhejiang style, a Wuyi yancha (rock oolong) for the mineral-roasted Fujian style, and a shou pu-erh for the dark-aged Yunnan story. Add a small porcelain gaiwan at around £15 to brew them in the gongfu style Jesse demonstrates in his videos. The leaf plus the vessel is the entry point; the rest is repetition.

Where this fits in the wider range: English Breakfast, Earl Grey, green tea, loose leaf tea, Darjeeling, oolong, and herbal tea. Wander the tea shop for the wider range, with free UK delivery from £35.

**FROM THE CURATOR**

*teas* · Per-cup price is the only price that matters. Loose leaf usually wins; supermarket bags sometimes do too.

### More from the tea wiki

- Green tea
- Black tea
- Oolong tea
- White tea
- Herbal tea
- Caffeine in tea
- How to make tea properly
- Loose leaf vs teabag


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