Tea Regions: The Major Producing Origins

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Tea regions, in summary:** Tea region is the single most-meaningful signal on a tea pack; Yunnan, Fujian, Darjeeling, Assam, Ceylon, Uji, Kenya are the origins to know.

Last reviewed by the teas.co.uk team in February 2026.

Tea is grown in dozens of countries across an equatorial band, China, India, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Japan, Taiwan, Vietnam, Indonesia, Argentina, Turkey, and increasingly the UK itself. Each region produces distinct teas shaped by climate, soil, processing tradition. Understanding regions helps you choose tea that matches what you actually want, terroir matters.

The major tea producing regions

China

Tea's origin and largest producer by volume. Over 30 distinct tea regions producing every category, green (Longjing, Gunpowder), black (Keemun, Lapsang Souchong), oolong (Da Hong Pao, Tieguanyin), white (Bai Mu Dan, Silver Needle), and pu erh (Yunnan). The tea diversity champion. More on Chinese tea.

India

Second largest producer. Three major regions: Assam (strong, malty black tea), Darjeeling (delicate, "Champagne of teas"), Nilgiri (smoother, lighter black). Plus modern Sikkim and Kangra valleys. More on Indian tea.

Sri Lanka (Ceylon)

The Ceylon black tea spectrum from low grown (heavy, full bodied) to high grown (lighter, brighter). Major regions: Nuwara Eliya, Dimbula, Uva, Kandy. Most British supermarket black tea blends contain Ceylon.

Kenya

Largest African producer. Strong, full bodied black tea. Most British mass market tea bag tea (Yorkshire, Tetley, PG Tips) contains substantial Kenyan content.

Japan

The green tea specialist. Sencha, matcha, gyokuro, hojicha. Major regions: Shizuoka (largest), Kagoshima, Uji (premium), Yame. Steam fixing process produces vivid green colour and umami flavour. More on Japanese tea.

Taiwan

Premium oolong specialist. Tieguanyin, Dong Ding, High Mountain (Alishan), Oriental Beauty. Distinctive floral fruity character.

Vietnam

Growing producer of both green and black tea. Lower price point, increasingly competitive quality.

Indonesia

Java and Sumatra. Mostly mid tier black tea for blending.

Argentina

Mate territory and growing tea production. Significant supplier to mass market blends.

Turkey

Strong domestic tea culture. Mostly Turkish style black tea brewed in samovars. Limited international export.

Iran

Domestic tea culture; some export. Black tea, often with bergamot or saffron.

Other producers

Bangladesh, Nepal, Malawi, Tanzania, Rwanda, USA (Hawaii), and increasingly UK (Tregothnan, Cornwall).

What region brings to the cup

Climate

Tropical with cool elevation = best tea climate. Cool nights + warm days + adequate rainfall + acidic soil = great tea conditions.

Elevation

- Low grown (under 600m): full bodied, faster growing, larger volumes.
- Mid grown (600-1200m): balanced.
- High grown (1200 to 2400m): more delicate, slower growing, more layered flavours.

Soil

Volcanic soils (Japan, Yunnan, Sri Lanka high country) produce distinctive minerality.

Tradition

Centuries old processing methods shape the tea: steaming for Japan, withering and rolling for India, multi step processing for Chinese oolongs.

Major Chinese tea regions

Yunnan

Pu erh and quality black tea. Birthplace of tea.

Fujian

White tea (Fuding), oolong (Wuyi mountains), specialty.

Zhejiang

Longjing (Dragon Well) green tea region.

Anhui

Keemun black tea, Huangshan green tea.

Sichuan

Yellow tea, ya'an specialty.

Hunan

Junshan Yinzhen yellow tea.

Guizhou

Modern producer of high quality green tea.

Major Indian tea regions

Assam

Strong, malty, full bodied black tea. The breakfast tea workhorse. More on Assam.

Darjeeling

Delicate first flush (March April), muscatel fruity second flush (May June), autumnal third flush (October November). Premium pricing. More on Darjeeling.

Nilgiri

Smoother black tea from southern India. Often used in iced tea.

Sikkim

Boutique production; similar to Darjeeling.

Kangra Valley

Northern India; small but growing.

Major Japanese tea regions

Shizuoka

40% of Japanese tea. Mostly sencha.

Kagoshima

Southern Japan. Modern, large scale production.

Uji (Kyoto)

The historical heart of Japanese tea. Premium matcha, gyokuro, sencha.

Yame (Fukuoka)

Premium gyokuro and sencha.

Sayama

Specialised pan fired sencha.

Major Sri Lankan tea regions

Nuwara Eliya (high grown)

Light, brisk, Champagne like. Premium high grown.

Uva (high grown, eastern)

Distinctive flavour from southwest monsoon timing.

Dimbula

Mid tier high grown; floral, balanced.

Kandy (mid grown)

Strong, full bodied. Common in blends.

Ruhuna (low grown, southern)

Heavy, full bodied. Often for blends and supermarket tea.

Modern UK tea production

Tregothnan in Cornwall has been growing British tea since 2005. Production is small but real. The English climate is marginal but workable on the Cornish microclimate. Quality is reasonable; price is premium tier due to small scale. Smaller operations have since followed, including Dartmoor Estate in Devon and the Wee Tea Plantation in Perthshire, Scotland.

Region matching

- **Strong morning tea:** Assam, Kenya.

- **Premium afternoon tea:** Darjeeling, Ceylon.
- **Smoky distinctive:** Lapsang Souchong (Fujian).
- **Floral oolong:** Taiwan, Anxi (Fujian).
- **Vegetal green:** Japan (sencha, matcha).
- **Smooth Chinese green:** Longjing (Zhejiang).
- **Aged complexity:** Yunnan pu erh.
- **Delicate white:** Fuding (Fujian).

FAQ

Largest tea producing region? China by volume; India second.

Best premium region? Depends on tea, Darjeeling for premium black; Uji for premium green.

UK grown tea? Yes, Tregothnan in Cornwall.

Most diverse region? China, produces every tea category.

Best for everyday black tea? Kenya and Assam form the backbone of British everyday tea.

Curator's note: regions matter. The same plant, Camellia sinensis, produces astonishingly different cups depending on climate, soil, processing, and tradition. Worth tasting across regions to develop your palate. Lee, teas.co.uk, Tunbridge Wells.

Quick reference: tea regions

Region	The note
Yunnan, China	Birthplace; pu-erh, Dian Hong, broad black-tea production
Fujian, China	Oolong heartland; Tieguanyin, Da Hong Pao, white tea
Zhejiang, China	Green-tea premium; Dragon Well (Longjing) the flagship
Darjeeling, India	The champagne of tea; first-flush and second-flush black
Assam, India	Strong malty black; the UK builder-tea standard
Nuwara Eliya, Sri Lanka	High-grown Ceylon; light and bright
Uji, Japan	Premium matcha and gyokuro origin
Kenya, Malawi	African black-tea bulk; UK builder-blend backbone

The relevant aisle: the English tea range and loose leaf range.

Reference noted

- Encyclopaedia Britannica: Tea (history)

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · If a region here sounds appealing, try one of its teas once. One cup from a region teaches more than twenty articles about it.

Tea regions reading

Continue with Darjeeling tea, Assam tea, Ceylon tea, Yunnan tea, single-origin tea and how to judge tea quality.

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

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/