

## The history of tea in Japan

The oldest record of tea drinking in Japan is found in the “Nihon Koki” (one of the six national histories compiled in ancient time of Japan). In this text, a Buddhist monk Eichu served tea to the Emperor Saga in 815. Tea was a very rare, luxury beverage imported from China at that time.

In medieval time, during Kamakura period (1185-1333), a Buddhist monk Yosai, founder of Rinzai Sect of Zen, brought tea seeds to Japan from Sung dynasty China.

These ancient and medieval tea was enjoyed in similar ways to today’s Matcha. The production and drinking method of Sencha was invented in Edo period, and was rapidly spread into the common people.



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## How to prepare tasty green tea (Sencha)

- ① Pour boiled water into tea cups to lower the water temperature. (120ml per person)



- ③ Pour the water in cups into the pot when it is cooled down to 70-80°C. Wait 1 to 2 minutes before serving.



- ② Put tea leaves into the tea pot. (3/4 of teaspoon = about 3g per person)



- ④ Pour the tea liquid into each cup little by little so that all cups will be of equal strength and flavor. Make sure of serving the last drop of the pot.



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## Perfect combination with Japanese cuisine

Japanese cuisine (e.g. Sushi), is now attracting worldwide attention as healthy foods. Japanese green tea brings out of delicate flavors of the ingredients, and provides refreshment after meals. In Japan, green tea is not only enjoyed in tea time but also throughout the day – before, during, and after meals.



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## Physiological functions of Japanese green tea

It is often said, 'Tea is miraculous drink for maintenance of health'. In recent years, with the advance of modern chemistry, components of tea have been scientifically analyzed and the results show the health effects of tea. It is gradually known that tea contains many components activating physiological functions. For example, catechins are drawing strong attention with its various health benefits.

Green tea components	Functions
Catechins	Anti-viral action Anti-tumor action Fat reducing action etc.
Caffeine	Removal of fatigue and sleepy feeling Diuretic action
Theanine	Anti-hypertensive action

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## The production processes of Japanese green tea



The most popular Japanese green tea is Sencha. The special flavor and beautiful green color of Sencha are given by its unique production process. These features are often lost by oxidization of catechin in tea leaves. To prevent the oxidization, tea leaves are steamed immediately after harvest. This steaming is characteristic to Japanese green tea production. After steaming, tea leaves are rolled and dried into a long, thin shape. This Aracha (pre-refined tea) is finally refined into Shiagecha (literally means 'finished tea') through sieving or cutting leaves. In refining, leaves are dried again to enhance preservability and add special aroma.

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