



eco-cha
TEA CLUB

Dong Ding Tie Guan Yin Oolong Tea

Harvest: Hand-picked
Season: Winter 2017

Region: Yonglong, Taiwan
Elevation: 700m

Oxidation: Heavy oxidation
Roast: Light roast

Flavor: *Fresh sweet grass aroma. Balanced, smooth honey and nutty tones. Fruity lingering finish.*

BREWING GUIDE:

 8g

 300mL

 95°C

 3 minutes

GARDEN

This batch of tea comes from Yonglong Village, just above Dong Ding Mountain in Lugu. This is the first crop of Tie Guan Yin strain that we know of being cultivated in central Taiwan. Our 80-year-old friend planted a small plot of Tie Guan Yin plants on his family land right behind his house. He processes the leaves in the traditional Dong Ding Oolong way that he learned as a young man. A unique find!

TASTING NOTES

This month's batch of tea being shared with the Eco-Cha Tea Club was made by Mr. Su — an 80-year-old artisan of traditional Dong Ding Oolong Tea. He planted a plot of the Tie Guan Yin strain in his backyard several years ago, and this is the second time we've sourced this tea type from him. Mr. Su is our favorite representative of traditionally made tea in Taiwan, and it brings us a special kind of joy to be able to share his tea with our tea club members.

This batch has a particularly sweet character, with slightly tangy, fruity notes and a pleasantly clean lingering aftertaste. It has just enough of that cured, almost fermented character that makes it reminiscent of a traditionally made Tie Guan Yin Oolong. But given that it was only roasted once, it maintains a mild flavor profile similar to a Hong Shui Oolong.

The first batch of this tea type that we shared with the Eco-Cha Tea Club two years ago was very similar to Dong Ding Oolong Tea made in the contemporary fashion. The oxidation, rolling and roasting methods were about the same as a quality Dong Ding Oolong we find being made by local artisans today. This month's batch is distinctly more representative of a traditional Oolong in that the leaves are more oxidized, loosely rolled, and only mildly roasted.

In this sense, it is similar to the locally made tea before Dong Ding Oolong tea



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was standardized and promoted commercially some 30 years ago. This type of tea made by pre-modern methods is now referred to as Hong Shui Oolong. The differences between Dong Ding and Hong Shui are in the degree of oxidation and roasting. Hong Shui tea leaves are oxidized about twice as much as Dong Ding, and are typically not roasted, or only very slightly.

THE STORY OF THIS TEA

Mr. Su was the first farmer we know of to plant a crop of Tie Guan Yin Tea trees in Lugu Township — the home of Dong Ding Oolong Tea. Historically, Tie Guan Yin (Iron Goddess of Mercy) is a traditional type of tea that has been produced for generations in a very small tea growing area just outside of Taipei, called Muzha. This traditional tea is perhaps the strongest character of all Taiwanese Oolongs. It is heavily oxidized, and undergoes an extensive drying and roasting process that gives it a very distinctive flavor profile.

Some large-scale plots of the Tie Guan Yin Tea strain have been planted in the last decade or so at high elevation in the Lishan tea producing region. But these crops are processed as High Mountain Tea, i.e. minimally oxidized and unroasted, and therefore have been given the name Lu Guan Yin (Green Goddess of Mercy) to distinguish it as a contemporary tea type made by modern tea processing methods.

After attempting to meet the demands of his long-term customers to process his Tie Guan Yin in the way they wished, Mr. Su has once again taken the liberty of processing this recent winter's harvest in the way that he sees fit, and we absolutely concur with his take — gleaned from some 60 years of experience in making traditional Dong Ding Oolong tea. In short, he processed this tea in basically the same way he made tea more than 30 years ago. Using pre-modern tea making experience to process a crop of Tie Guan Yin tea leaves offers us a tea that



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simply is not to be found on the market.

This is the heart of Eco-Cha's mission — to share what we perceive to be a unique, local traditional culture — while simultaneously encouraging these artisans to keep their local tradition alive and thriving. Mr. Su's appreciation for our acknowledgement of his skill, and excitement over sourcing a batch of tea that he himself is proud of, is what propels us. We are honored by our role in supporting this tradition and sharing it with tea lovers around the world.