

Da Yu Ling High Mountain Tea

Harvest: Medium batch
Season: Fall 2017

Region: Heping Township
Elevation: 2200m

Oxidation: Light
Roast: Unroasted

Flavor: *Mildly sweet, bold foresty aroma. Rich, smooth, fresh and vibrant character. Heady, fruity aftertaste.*

BREWING GUIDE:

 7g

 300ml

 95°C

 3 minutes

GARDEN

This garden is located at the 97 km marker of Taiwan's Cross-Central Highway. It is one of the few remaining tea gardens in this remote, highest elevation area. The highest elevation tea growing regions are widely acknowledged as the epitome High Mountain Oolong Tea production. The ideal climate conditions offered by this elevation combined with the methods of tea cultivation that have been developed are considered to be the main factors that have gained this category of tea its fame.

TASTING NOTES

This month's batch of Da Yu Ling High Mountain Oolong tea being shared with the Eco-Cha Tea Club is sufficiently oxidized and unroasted. This style of processing transforms the fresh, green character into a more balanced, sweeter, full bodied brew while maintaining the delicate floral and vegetal aromatic notes.

We used 9g of tea leaves in a 150ml porcelain gaiwan, and brewed it for about 1 minute per brew, extending the brewing time slightly each time. Using this method, these leaves can be brewed at least six times, or more.

The aroma of the brewed leaves is a deep, foresty green combined with subtle sweet pastry and floral notes. The brew is smooth on the palate, balanced, with creamy vegetal and delicate flowery notes, and a vibrant, lingering finish.

In addition to the broader spectrum of fresh vibrant notes that the highest elevation teas offer, there is a substantial consistency and smoothness of texture that these thicker heartier leaves produce. The main reason for this is the greater daily temperature changes between night and day, which results in higher concentrations of particular compounds in the leaves that produce these flavor characteristics.

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THE STORY OF THIS TEA

This month's batch of the Eco-Cha Tea Club comes from the highest elevation tea growing region in Taiwan — Da Yu Ling. This place name denotes a section of the Cross-Central Highway 8 that runs from Taichung to Hualien. This region has become controversial in recent years for environmental reasons. But the truth is, it's just another remote high elevation tea growing region (i.e. not so different from many others) that has been targeted by government agencies due to its proximity to high mountain watershed land, and its prestige.

Our interest in offering this batch is simply to share this fall crop of tea that is not overly marketed, but still represents a farm in a growing region that stands apart in the spectrum of tea production here in Taiwan. In other words, it's our effort to share the best high elevation tea without representing overblown marketing trends. We've done taste tests between the three seasons harvested from this farm. Spring and winter harvest are beyond our budget.

But fall harvest from the same farm... Think about it. The seasons are less and less distinguishable in terms of weather in recent years. It is our mission to be transparent in offering the best quality for the market value. So here you have it, the "off" fall season - which is comparable in quality to the "on" spring/winter harvests, but slightly more oxidized (i.e. more skill and effort in the making).

This garden is located at 2200m elevation, at the 97 km marker of Taiwan's Cross-Central Highway. It is one of the few remaining tea gardens in this area, since most of the gardens beyond this point have been reclaimed as national forest land.

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This is a rare batch of Da Yu Ling High Mountain Tea in that the level of oxidation exceeds the commonly produced tea in this region at highest elevation. The difference between the standard 10-15% level of oxidation and the less commonly produced 20-25% is that the light, floral, green character is transformed into a more fruity, substantial, smooth character of High Mountain Oolong.

Our friend, who shares his stock of Da Yu Ling Tea with us, has cooperated with the farmer of this tea garden for 20 years. He has continuously procured entire daily harvests every season, and has advised the farmer in the use of fertilizers with the purpose of producing the highest quality leaf possible. He is of the conviction of using whole soy beans for fertilizer, instead of commercial fertilizer containing the by-product of producing soy oil, and other soy-based products. This is a slower, more sustainable method of fertilization that he is convinced has resulted in a healthier soil base. The entire fall harvest amounted to less than

500kg. This is minimal in comparison to most high elevation tea farms. This farm is both legitimate and precious.

Most of the tea gardens in the Da Yu Ling region have been removed by the national Forestry Dept., which has only in recent years has begun enforcing land use laws. This farm was reduced by 1/3 of its overall area in 2014 for the same reason. And it is only due to the long-standing relationship our friend has with this farmer that we are able to source this tea which is basically sold out before it is harvested each season.

We look forward to hearing about your experience of this batch that we once again feel privileged to share! Please post your comments, photos and tasting videos here for all of our tea club members to enjoy!