



eco-cha  
TEA CLUB

## Gold Medal Award Winning Dong Ding Cui Yu Oolong Tea

Harvest: Medium batch  
Season: Spring 2018

Region: Songbolin, Taiwan  
Elevation: 400m

Oxidation: Medium  
Roast: Medium

**Flavor:** *Bold, toasted nutty aroma. Balanced, smooth, roasted character. Rich, peaty finish.*

### BREWING GUIDE:

 6g

 300ml

 95°C

 3 minutes

### GARDEN

Songbolin is a historical tea producing region that is home to some of the most skilled Oolong Tea artisans in Taiwan. This Gold Medal Award winning batch of tea was procured by a top competition player, and cured with a precision that attained First Prize in this same local competition a few years ago.

### TASTING NOTES

This month's batch of tea being shared with the Eco-Cha Tea Club has a rich, substantial, heavy roast character that is especially smooth and satisfying. The flavor notes include dried fruit, like plum and apricot, over a smoky, slow-roasted base.

### BREWING TIP:

Given that this batch of tea was prepared for competition by removing the stems to optimize roasting results and its appearance, as well as the fact that it was heavily roasted, less leaves are necessary in brewing. We recommend a proportion of about 1:24 leaves to water. So 6-7 grams tea leaves

for a 150ml tea pot.

The deep amber/orange color and vibrant transparency of the brewed tea indicates that the leaves were well-roasted, but carefully, over several long slow roasting sessions. When properly done, tea leaves that undergo heavy roasting, brew a rich, smooth, smoky flavored tea. Yet the color of the brewed tea is not particularly dark, and the brewed leaves are still mostly supple, and maintain a significant amount of green in their coloration.

The hybrid strain of Cui Yu (翠玉), a.k.a. Tsui Yu, or Jade Oolong, can withstand traditional processing methods of heavier oxidation and roasting with good results. This hybrid strain that became popular in the late 1980's and 1990's along with Jin Xuan, is now becoming relatively rare. This is due to the fact that it produces less yield than Jin Xuan and Four Seasons Spring, and it is a bit less hardy and versatile in its growing conditions than these other two hybrid strains.

So this month's batch of the Eco-Cha



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Tea Club is a Taiwanese invention of a hybrid strain that has seen its heyday, and is slowly dwindling in its cultivation. This, combined with the fact that this batch received a Gold Medal Award in a local competition that represents traditional tea making, puts it in a category of its own. We feel that it represents Taiwan's Tea Culture in both a traditional and a modern way.

### THE STORY OF THIS TEA

Almost 3 years ago, a husband and wife team won first place in the winter 2015 competition of Nantou County Tea Trade Association's Dong Ding Tsui Yu (Cui Yu) Tea Competition. This month's batch of tea being shared with the Eco-Cha Tea Club was entered into the same competition in spring 2018, and received the Gold Medal Award. This award ranks within the top 5% of all entries. This competition has been in existence for almost 25 years. It began with the development of Tsui Yu (Tai Cha #13) tea production in the early 1990's.

### TRADITIONAL OOLONG TEA COMPETITION IN TAIWAN

We are particularly fond of this competition because the standard of the flavor profile by which these tea entries are judged resembles a traditionally made Dong Ding Oolong tea. In order to achieve this character, the leaves undergo medium oxidation (30-40%), and are then roasted repeatedly to produce a hearty, robust character of tea. This level of oxidation and roasting is closer to a pre-modern processing method that involves heavily curing the tea leaves to stabilize their consistency and have a longer shelf life. In fact, this type of tea is often considered to increase in quality with age.

Acknowledging that the labor intensive traditional methods that require knowledge and skill are being promoted by this association is encouraging. In our perception, Dong Ding Oolong tea is the most prominent representative of a traditional locally produced specialty tea in Taiwan. And this association has preserved and promoted this local culture by integrating this modern hybrid tea plant with traditionally developed tea making skills.