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TEA CLUB
Long Feng Xia
High Mountain Oolong Tea

Harvest: Hand-picked
Season: Winter 2018

Region: Zhushan, Taiwan
Elevation: 1700m

Oxidation: Light
Roast: Unroasted

Flavor: *Soft, buttery vegetal/straw aroma. Creamy, savory scone flavor. Clean, dry, satisfying finish.*

BREWING GUIDE:

 9g

 300ml

 95°C

 3 minutes

GARDEN

Long Feng Xia, or Dragon Phoenix Gorge, is at the higher elevations of the Shanlinxi tea growing region. It is a ridge on the south side of this mountain range, overlooking a vast gorge. It's south-facing position offers more exposure to sunlight, combined with the daily fog that rises up from the deep gorge. This name represents some of the highest quality tea from this region.

TASTING NOTES

Batch #38 of the Eco-Cha Tea Club is kicking off 2019 with a cutting edge rendition of Taiwanese High Mountain Oolong Tea. We're inspired to share this batch of tea because of its differentiating value from the conventional market grade High Mountain Tea that has become well known in Taiwan and beyond.

The differentiating value is in the timing of the harvest, and in the processing methods employed in curing the leaves. The leaves were allowed to grow further into maturity in their initial growth cycle. So they were picked a week or so later

than the norm, which means that a portion of the leaves on the growing tip stem that was plucked were very close to full size. In addition to the timing of the harvest, the leaves were sufficiently oxidized (i.e. more than than norm of SOP High Mountain Tea production), and more significantly — they were dried more extensively in the final stage of processing to stabilize their composition.

The tea farms on the ridge above Long Feng Xia (Dragon Phoenix Gorge) boast some of the finest yield of High Mountain Oolong leaf in Taiwan. This is due to the micro-climate in conjunction with farm management and processing of the harvests by some of the most knowledgeable tea producers in the world. This farming region is partially managed by traditional tea makers in nearby Lugu, the home of Dong Ding Oolong Tea. So the generations of experience in tea making combined with ideal high elevation growing conditions offers us a next level of High Mountain Oolong Tea.

So, what do all of the above factors boil



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down to in the brewing of this batch of leaf? Well, it offers a mellowed, stable composition of unroasted, yet well-cured high elevation Oolong. The sufficiently oxidized, thoroughly dried leaves brew a balanced, full bodied character with a creamy texture that carries both vegetal and fresh pastry notes. It's both soothing and stimulating. It's not roasted, and it's not green. It's got a touch of mild herbs, cauliflower, heavy cream, and a hint of baked root vegetables. In short, it's satisfying. And the original flavor is less susceptible to losing it's original flavor over time, due to its thorough and masterful curing process. Please let us know what your experience is, and how you think this subtle yet significant variation of tea processing suits your tea taste!

THE STORY OF THIS TEA

Long Feng Xia (龍鳳峽) or Dragon Phoenix Gorge is a deep river valley on the south side of the Shan Lin Xi High Mountain Tea growing region. Long Feng Xia is also the place name of the ridge overlooking this gorge, and is well known

in Taiwan as the source of some of the best quality Shan Lin Xi High Mountain Oolong Tea.

The micro-climate for most of the tea farms on this relatively small ridge offers ideal growing conditions for High Mountain Tea. Since this ridge is overlooking a massive gorge, it gets more sun exposure than the slopes along the much narrower valleys just north of it. The ridge is also more readily accessible to the year-round fog that rises almost daily from the valley floor, providing moisture and a substantial drop in temperature after the morning hours of high elevation sun. These are the essentials of ideal growing conditions: Daily sun and fog, providing a greater variation in temperature on a daily basis. In addition to these climate conditions, farm management and quality soil are also vital.

While the raw produce from these farms offers some of the best quality tea leaves, most of this produce is processed as a very minimally oxidized High Mountain Tea. This is mainly because it is the most reliable method for producing consistent



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quality and is the least labor and skill intensive. So this is how High Mountain Oolong was initially promoted when it was introduced in the 1980's — as a very fresh, fragrant green character. This was in stark contrast to the previously popular traditionally made teas, such as Dong Ding Oolong.

It's only in recent years that a growing, but still small number of cutting edge High Mountain Tea producers are opting for an alternative. They are of the conviction that slightly more oxidation, combined with more extensive drying at the final stage of processing, offers a quality of tea that is more satisfying and also more stable in its composition. The extensive drying mellows the flavor profile, giving it more body and depth. It also stabilizes the leaf, so that it maintains its original flavor — as opposed to the less oxidized, fresh green character of the conventionally made High Mountain Tea.

This is the reason why we are sharing this batch of tea with the Eco-Cha Tea Club. It's a prime example of this new trend in High Mountain Oolong Tea making. We find it to be superior in quality to the

conventionally made, minimally processed High Mountain Tea that is very close to a Green Tea in its flavor profile as well as in its volatility and fragile shelf life. We see this method of tea processing as offering a value-added product that is more sustainable in its standard of quality than the more SOP/risk-free methods of tea making that the majority of High Mountain Tea producers follow.

Please let us know what your experience is, and how you think this subtle yet significant variation of tea processing suits your tea taste!