



eco-cha
TEA CLUB
Qing Xin Oolong Black Tea

Harvest: Hand-picked
Season: July 2018

Region: Lugu, Taiwan
Elevation: 700m

Oxidation: Fully oxidized
Roast: Unroasted

Flavor: *Fruit/pastry aroma. Rich, complex, balanced composition. Delicately sweet, lingering finish.*

BREWING GUIDE:

 6g

 300ml

 95°C

 3 minutes

GARDEN

This tea garden is in Phoenix Village, located on the ridge above Dong Ding Mountain. This garden is in the home of our source of Shan Lin Xi High Mountain Oolong. He is a 3rd generation Dong Ding Oolong Tea maker. He incorporates Oolong Tea methods in his Black Tea processing. His traditional tea making expertise is represented in this batch of Black Tea made from his summer crop of heirloom Qing Xin Oolong tea trees.

TASTING NOTES

This month's batch of tea being shared with the Eco-Cha Tea Club is a Small Leaf Black Tea made from the summer crop of heirloom Qing Xin Oolong tea leaves. The Qing Xin strain is commonly referred to as simply "Oolong" in the local tea industry here in Taiwan. We, on the other hand, use the term "Oolong" to refer to the processing method of being partially oxidized. So we decided to include the cultivar name for the sake of clarity.

Small Leaf Black Tea is tea made from strains of tea that are cultivated mostly

for Oolong Tea making, or partially oxidized teas. These include Qing Xin, Jin Xuan, Tsui Yu, Four Seasons Spring, and more. Small Leaf Type is a general category to be distinguished from Large Leaf Type, which includes Assam, Red Jade #18, Fo Shou, and the Wild Tea strain that is naturally occurring in Taiwan.

In addition to the name of the tea strain, this batch of tea was made by an artisan of Dong Ding Oolong Tea with his family plot of heirloom tea trees. He incorporated Oolong Tea methods in the very first step of solar withering, and the very last step of tightly rolling the tea leaves. So the raw material of the summer crop of heirloom Qing Xin Oolong tea leaves, processed by an Oolong Tea maker by trade offers us this superior quality Black Tea.

This batch of tea offers a complex fruity character in the brewed tea. The aroma is sweet, like stewed pears in syrup and prunes. The flavor is rich and yet delicate in its relatively light-bodied consistency. It has a concentrated quality, but is not at all murky or



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muddled. This aspect makes it reminiscent of a well oxidized Oolong Tea.

You can see that there is still some green remaining in the coloration of the brewed leaves, even though the leaves have been heavily rolled in the oxidation process. This is the norm in Small Leaf Black Tea making in Taiwan, and, along with the type of raw material, is what sets the flavor profile apart from Large Leaf Black Teas. There is a balanced sweet and dry finish with an especially long lingering aftertaste. The overall character is reminiscent of fruit compote, with just enough tartness to give it a clean mouth feel.

THE STORY OF THIS TEA

The matriarch of the Chen family is in the forefront of the photo above, harvesting tea leaves by hand from their residential farm, as she has for several decades. This plot of tea is considered an heirloom strain of Qing Xin Oolong, as it was planted over 30 years ago. In the local industry, this strain of tea plant is simply called "Oolong" to differentiate it from the newer

generations of Taiwanese hybrid strains that have become popular in recent decades. In central Taiwan especially, Qing Xin Oolong is predominantly what is cultivated for traditional tea making as well as High Mountain Tea.

We chose the name "Qing Xin Oolong Black Tea" in accordance with the local terminology, which would be simply "Oolong Black Tea" (烏龍紅茶). But because in English, Oolong is the name given to partially oxidized teas, we added the Chinese pinyin of this traditional strain of tea plant that originated in mainland China. Qing Xin literally means "green heart" which describes the appearance of the stem of the leaf.

Mr. Chen in recent years uses his summer crop from his family plot of tea to make Black Tea. His spring and winter crops are made into traditionally made Dong Ding Oolong. Mr. Chen began assisting his father and grandfather in making traditional Oolong Tea when he was 14. He went to night school all through high school, and learned tea making and farming by day. We believe that his expertise as a traditional Oolong Tea



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maker are a significant influence on the quality of his Black Tea.

Two aspects of processing these tea leaves that were made into Black Tea are additional reasons for calling it "Oolong Black Tea". The first is that the leaves have undergone solar withering after being picked. This is the standard initial step in Oolong Tea making, but is unorthodox in Black Tea making. Oolong Tea makers see fit to incorporate solar withering in the making of Black Tea.

Secondly, the leaves were tightly rolled, in the fashion of most Taiwanese Oolongs. Black Tea leaves are typically left unrolled, and dried in a slightly curled shape. Tightly rolling the tea leaves protects them from crumbling, and also makes for much more convenient and space-saving packaging.