



eco-cha
TEA CLUB
Jin Xuan GABA Black Tea

Harvest: Hand-picked, small batch
Season: Summer 2018

Region: Songboling, Taiwan
Elevation: 400m

Oxidation: Fully oxidized
Roast: Dry roast

Flavor: *Rich, soothing fruity aroma. Amazing, full bodied, sweet/tangy character. Dried plum and papaya finish.*

BREWING GUIDE:

 6g

 300ml

 95°C

 3 minutes

GARDEN

The producers of this tea are the most progressive and sustainable tea farmers we've met. This husband and wife team employ completely natural farming methods. They are also conducting ongoing experimentation in their processing methods to maximize the quality and value of their produce. This batch is a flagship version of GABA Black Tea.

TASTING NOTES

The source of this month's batch of tea being shared with the Eco-Cha Tea Club is one of our most admired people we've met in the local tea industry here in Taiwan. He has pioneered natural tea farming methods and tea processing methods and succeeded in producing quality tea that is not found in the general marketplace. We are privilege to learn from and represent Mr. Xie, with whom we've now developed a lasting friendship.

Mr. Xie has been producing significant quantities of GABA Oolong Tea for several years, but this is the first batch

of GABA tea that he processed as a Black Tea. After sharing his hand-picked, naturally farmed GABA Oolong that had been aged for a full year last July, we are excited to share this batch that was harvested last June, and aged nine months. While these time periods do not qualify as "aging" tea, they do allow the composition of the leaves to mellow and offer a richer, more full-bodied character.

This month's GABA Black Tea has a similar flavor profile to last July's batch, with a more thoroughly cured, mellowed character. While last July's batch of GABA Oolong maintained some of its fresh/dried fruit character, this month's GABA Black is more of a cured/cooked fruit character. It offers more caramelized, or stewed fruit flavored notes. It's still delicate and complex, but with more depth and perhaps even molasses character. We find it very soothing, and it's flavor accompanies its proposed calming effect.

THE STORY OF THIS TEA

After years of honing his GABA tea



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making skills using Oolong processing methods, Mr. Xie decided to process this harvest as a GABA Black Tea for the first time. The entire harvest amounted to less than 20 kg, and by the time we found out about it, there was barely enough to be shared with our Tea Club members!

We also shared a batch of Mr. Xie's Black Tea made from a crop of his naturally farmed Wuyi tea plants with the Tea Club almost three years ago. We proclaimed that batch of Wuyi Black Tea to be the best Black Tea we had tasted to date. Well, now we have a very different, but equally special batch of Black Tea to share from this source that is a model of sustainability in naturally farmed specialty tea production.

In brief, his farming approach includes no use of fertilizers or irrigation, and he also does not cut or pull the weeds that grow in his plots of tea. Rather, he lets them grow to a certain height, and then pushes them over with a hand truck. With these methods, he is slowly transitioning plot after plot of tea in a low elevation region and consequently increasing the quality and value of the tea produced. This is

what we find most inspiring in terms of having a sustainable impact on the local industry! In addition to this, he has experimented and developed innovative processing methods — one of which is GABA Tea.

The difference in processing methods between last July's batch and this month's batch of GABA tea is how the leaves were oxidized. In Oolong Tea making, the leaves are tumbled slowly for 2-3 hours in large bamboo cylinders intermittently between long resting periods inside oxygen-free tanks. Then they undergo tumble heating to cease the oxidation process and fix the composition of the leaves.

In making Black Tea, the leaves are not tumbled, but rather they are rigorously pressed and rolled, after up to two days of transformation inside oxygen-free tanks, with intermittent shuffling only. This pressure rolling breaks down the fibers and cell walls in the leaves, exposing and mixing the compounds in the sap, resulting in a more thorough transformation in the oxidation process. They are then dried and gently rolled to fix them in their curled shape.



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The flavor profiles that result from these variations in the long, slow, curing processes are quite distinct, yet with the same underlying GABA character of a mildly sweet fruity character. We feel that this is a unique opportunity to offer two batches of tea made from the same plot of naturally farmed tea, only one year apart, with variations only in how the leaves were cured.