



eco^{cha}

TEA CLUB

Traditional Lugu Oolong Tea

Harvest: Hand-picked, small batch
Season: Winter 2019

Region: Dalunshan, Lugu, Taiwan
Elevation: 1000m

Oxidation: Heavy
Roast: Heavy

Flavor: *Deep woody aroma with notes of berry compote. Bold, balanced roasted nutty character. Clean, vibrant, mildly sweet finish with notes of candied yams.*

BREWING GUIDE:

 9g

 300ml

 95°C

 3 minutes

GARDEN

This batch of tea is from a plot of tea on the lower slopes of Big Wheel Mountain, just below the Shan Lin Xi region. This farmer cleared a section of his uncle's bamboo forested land, and planted tea about 20 years ago. He is committed to crafting Oolong Tea in the traditional manner that originally made Lugu famous.

TASTING NOTES

Batch #52 of the Eco-Cha Tea Club brings us back to our roots of local tea culture— since our introduction to Taiwanese tea began in Lugu, way back in 1993! Both the source of this tea and its flavor profile invoke those memories of our early days here in Taiwan.

As you know from the sourcing blog post, this tea was made by an independent farmer who manages his own plot of tea and cures it in his home factory. His factory would now be considered rudimentary by today's tea production standards, but we believe that it is an essential factor in giving his tea its authentic and substantial

character. The leaves were skillfully and substantially oxidized when processed, a prerequisite the sweetness and complexity. They were then roasted extensively for over 25 hours total — comprised of 3 separate roasting sessions done over several weeks.

The flavor of this batch of tea embodies the classic Taiwan Oolong profile, with a sweet note that is most immediately recognized, followed by a complexity that includes mild bitterness and astringency to make all the flavor notes pop. It's got a rich, dense sweetness akin to roasted yams and butternut squash, and an interesting tanginess like stewed or dried apricots. The later brews bring out the roasted character more, adding smoky notes that bring it into the realm of a fine whisky. It's the kind of flavor profile that you won't tire of easily, if ever!

You can see from the brewed leaves that the roasting process was done with finesse. The leaves maintain the original green color, and are still supple and open fully with brewing. They are not burnt or "petrified" by over-roasting.



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In short, this tea maker truly does his best — starting with his family land on which he cultivates the local specialty produce, and cures himself, with all the skill and knowledge that he has gained from over 20 years of hands-on experience. This is why we chose the simple, direct name of Traditional Lugu Oolong Tea for this edition of the Eco-Cha Tea Club!

THE STORY OF THIS TEA

Batch #52 of the Eco-Cha Tea Club is a Traditional Lugu Oolong Tea from the most recent winter harvest in November 2019. This the second batch of tea Eco-Cha has sourced from this farmer. We first shared the winter 2018 harvest with the Eco-Cha Tea Club last June. This independent tea farmer is a prime example of local artisan tea culture.

Mr. Zhang's father cultivated tea on their homesteaded land in Xiaobantian, on the southside of Lugu Township, where he grew up in the midst of traditional tea making. At 20 something, Mr. Zhang decided to embody his local tradition by clearing his uncle's yet-to-be farmed land

to cultivate his own plot of tea higher up and deeper into the mountains.

Since this time, he also acquired seasonal work in tea factories in Lugu, Shanlinxi, Alishan, Fanzaitian, and Lishan. In a word, he learned the ropes of tea making in a comprehensive way, like most tea farmers of his generation. Lugu Township hosts the highest concentration of both traditional Oolong and High Mountain Tea makers in Taiwan, and is a hub of specialty tea making culture.

The recent winter yield was very minimal all over Taiwan, but especially from farms like this one that rely solely on rain for irrigation. After heavy rains at the very beginning of the growing season in September, it stopped raining altogether — for two months! Mr. Zhang's winter yield was about a third of the normal amount. The only good thing about this is that the tea leaves that did grow made some very good tea! We got a sample in January, after he roasted the leaves 3 times over almost two months, and immediately called him up to reserve just enough to share with the Tea Club.