

Early Spring Bi Luo Chun Green Tea

Harvest: Hand-picked, small batch

Season: March 7, 2020
Region: Sanxia, Taiwan

Elevation: 300m

Flavor: *Herbal/floral aroma. Delicate, fresh, subtle notes of mint and chamomile. Clean, lingering flowery finish.*

BREWING GUIDE:

5g

300ml

95°C

3 minutes

GARDEN

This batch of tea was picked in the first few days of spring harvest. It's considered the most prized harvest time of the year. Bi Luo Chun Green Tea production entails zero pesticides throughout the entire growing season. This is because very young, tender leaves are picked every 7-10 days for making this type of tea, so the harvest is basically ongoing.

TASTING NOTES



We can see in the photo of the dried leaves above that they were hand-plucked while still very young and tender. This is evident not only by the size of the leaves, but also in the protective fur that is still on the whitish

colored leaf buds. It is this stage of leaf growth, along with the heirloom cultivar of tea tree that give Bi Luo Chun its distinctive character among Green Teas — especially when it is from the first flush of spring tea buds!



The brewed tea is very light in color, with a soft, transparent luminescence. The word "elegant" comes to mind in an attempt to describe its visual character. The cup of tea in the photo above was poured through a fine mesh strainer to present the "tea soup" without the

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fibers from the leaf buds. Many tea aficionados will contend that the "fur" from the leaf buds is the best part, and by no means should be filtered out! We encourage you to try both, with all of your tea tasting attention, and allow the tea to tell you!

We also recommend that you explore the amount of tea leaves used in proportion to the amount of water. You can start with as little as one gram of tea per 70mL of water! This will brew a very subtle yet complex aromatic profile with a surprisingly long-lasting finish. For a bit more substance on the palate, start with a 1:40 ratio of leaves to water, which can be increased to as much as 1:25, or more! Bi Luo Chun really does offer a wider range of flavor profiles based on brewing methods than most teas. So take the opportunity to explore what it has to offer! Water temperature at 75°-85°C is recommended.

This pot of tea was brewed with a 1:25 ratio of leaf to water, at about 80°C, starting at 30 seconds brewing time. The aroma is fresh green vegetal with savory herbal notes and a hint of

toasted leaf. The flavor has a base of sweet tender greens, and is impressively balanced by a complex bouquet of semi-dried flowers that lingers for a long pleasant moment. The sweet/savory/floral combo delivered with a smooth watery mouthfeel is really satisfying and refreshing. We continue to be intrigued and happily surprised by the well-rounded complexity of Bi Luo Chun, and this batch of first flush spring tea has an especially subtle and complex profile to be explored and enjoyed. Don't forget to vary the amount leaves used, water temps, and brewing times to experience the full spectrum of flavors!

The brewed leaves exhibit their uniform, fresh green condition, replete with the pointed tips of unfurled leaf buds. The leaves are loosely rolled after they are exposed to high temperature. The heat wilts the leaves, making them very tender and susceptible to tearing. This, along with the fragility of the dried leaves that are only curled rather than tightly rolled, and break easily when packaged, is why some of the leaves are no longer in whole-leaf form.

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THE STORY OF THIS TEA

In making Bi Luo Chun Green Tea, the leaves are picked when they are still quite young. They are harvested every 7-10 days, so there is still a lot of the protective "fur" on the tender young leaf buds. This is why the brewed tea appears to have fibers floating in it. It is the fine "hairs" on the leaf buds that mostly fall off in the rolling and drying of the leaves.

Since the leaves are picked so frequently,

there is no use of pesticides whatsoever throughout the harvest season. The only time pesticides are used on these farms is after the tea trees have been pruned, to prevent microbial disease in the plants. Pruning is normally only done every 2-3 years. San Xia, the tea farming community south of Taipei that produces Bi Luo Chun, cultivates a now rare heirloom strain of tea tree called Qing Xin Gan Zai (青心柑仔). This strain is known for its tenacity in being able to tolerate continuous harvesting of its new growth, as well as producing a hardy, substantial leaf that provides a full-flavored tea.

The earliest days of spring harvest are known to produce the most complex and delicately flavored tea. The leaves have more substance as a result of growing more slowly, combined with a fresh spring floral quality that comes from the plants entering their heightened phase of spring vegetation.

Honestly, we never really knew how satisfying Green Tea can be until we started sourcing Bi Luo Chun last year! It is full-flavored and complex, and it maintains its fresh qualities very well. We

eco-cha
TEA CLUB

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planned ahead to be able to source a batch of tea that was picked as soon as spring harvest began to share with the Eco-Cha Tea Club.