

How to brew an exquisite pot of tea

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- 1. First obtain some high-quality tea.**¹
Place one teaspoonful of tea leaves in a small teapot.²
- 2. Bring water to a boil.**
Pour hot water into the teapot and wait for 1:10 minutes (one minute and ten seconds).
- 3. Pour the tea from the teapot into a serving pot.**
This is important to prevent the bitterness that would develop if the tea was left brewing.
- 4. Pour the tea from the serving pot into the teacups.**
- 5. Appreciate the fragrance and colour of the tea,** and particularly notice the fresh feeling and sweet taste at the back of the throat following each sip. The Chinese word for “sweet” is actually a picture of the back of the throat!
- 6. When finished with the first brewing,** pour more boiling water over the tea leaves in the teapot, cover again, and wait for 1:40 minutes (one minute and 40 seconds). Pour into the serving pot and enjoy as before. This will probably be the best brew, as the tea leaves have fully opened by this time.
- 7. The third brewing** should be left for 3 minutes before pouring off, to extract the final taste and fragrance from the tea leaves.

¹ How do you know it is good quality? Until you develop your own ability to taste the difference, price. Good tea, like good wine is expensive. A friend who was knowledgeable about good wines was saying to an acquaintance, “You see this bottle of wine? It costs \$30.” The acquaintance replied “That’s crazy! If you want wine, I can get you some for only \$4.50!”

Unfortunately, outside of China most of us are just like my friend’s acquaintance – we have no knowledge or appreciation of the higher range of tea and the subtle complex tastes to be found from a good tea.

People who would not balk at paying \$25 for a bottle of wine to be consumed over one dinner are shocked at that price for a packet of fine quality tea that will last them a month or more.

² You will need to experiment somewhat to find the right quantity of tea for each teapot. As a general rule of thumb, there should be one layer of leaves covering the bottom of the pot. Look and see. If the bottom is only half-covered, the tea will be weak. If there is more than one layer of tea covering the bottom, it will be bitter.

Any type of teapot can be used, but those made from the porous “purple clay” (*zi sha*) actually absorb the flavour of the tea, and thus enrich subsequent brewings, like a good cooking pot enhances the flavour of a meal.