



Profile : Small Black Tea Brick

Loose - Formed - China Black Tea

December 16, 2025

CUP CHARACTERISTICS: Pressed black Pu-erh tea with typical earthy character. Decorative and unique gift or conversation starter. Generally not used as a beverage.

INGREDIENTS: Black tea

INGREDIENTS FROM: China

REGION(S): Hubei Province

GROWING ALTITUDES: 2000 - 4000 feet above sea level

GRADE(S): Compressed OP (Orange Pekoe)

MANUFACTURE TYPE(S): Compressed tea - Silk Road traditional style

ANTIOXIDANT LEVEL: Low

CAFFEINE LEVEL: Medium

KOSHER: Yes

VEGETARIAN: Yes

VEGAN: Yes

ARTISANAL NOTES: Packed in Canada at The Metropolitan Tea Company.

INFUSION: Tending dull





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INFORMATION:

Tea bricks are perhaps one of the most visually striking forms of processed tea in the world. The origin of the brick is rooted in the ancient spice trading routes of the ancient Far East in and around the 9th century. Traders and caravan herders transported everything they had by camel or on horseback so all goods had to be designed to take up as little space as possible. Tea producers wishing to export their product devised a way of compacting processed tea leaves by mixing it with stalk and tea dust and then pressing it tightly into forms and drying them in the sun. Centuries of trading made the tea bricks become so popular that by the 19th and even early 20th centuries, pieces broken from a brick were used as currency in Tibet, Mongolia, Siberia, and Northern China.

The method traditionally used for brewing tea from a tea brick was to roast a piece over a flame until it turned reddish. The piece of brick was then crumbled and brewed in a pot. In some parts of China it was also customary to spice up the brew by adding onion, ginger, and orange. In Tibet, tea bricks were traditionally used to make the country's famous fermented yak butter tea. As for we North Americans however, if you find you have no fermented yak butter in the fridge, we recommend simply using regular milk - although most people nowadays like tea bricks simply for their aesthetic qualities. These tea bricks make a unique gift and a great conversation starter if placed in an upright plate holder.

Where was black Pu-erh developed? Good question. While the exact origins of most Chinese Pu-erh teas have been lost to the mists of time and place, the origin of black Pu-erh can be pinpointed directly to the Kunming Tea Factory in the year 1972. In that year, the government of China, seeking to broaden its economic base, mandated that the Kunming factory develop a new, delicious tea that could be widely marketed. Drawing on centuries of experience, the tea masters of Kunming determined that a black Pu-erh was the ticket. (They were right, to this day black Pu-erh is the world's top selling variety.)

What makes black Pu-erh tea different from other black teas? Great question. The answer is real fermentation and aging. Black Pu-erh undergoes a fermentation process in which the tea is processed and stored for a set period of time without being dried completely. The tea is usually either buried in the ground, stored in caves or under damp heavy tarps. Fermenting over time imparts the earthy character typical of most Pu-erh teas.

STEEPING TIME

TEA CUP	8oz (237ml)	10oz (296ml)	12oz (355ml)
AMOUNT	Break tea to get roughly 1 heaping teaspoon of "The Perfect Measure Spoon" (Item# 11MS-1370-)	Break tea to get roughly 1 heaping teaspoon of "The Perfect Measure Spoon" (Item# 11MS-1370-)	Break tea to get roughly 1.5 heaping teaspoon of "The Perfect Measure Spoon" (Item# 11MS-1370-)
MILD	2-3 min	2-3 min	2-3 min
MEDIUM	4-5 min	4-5 min	4-5 min
STRONG	6-7 min	6-7 min	6-7 min
MetroTea recommends 4-5 min			

TEA POT	18oz (532ml)	36oz (1064ml)	48oz (1419ml)
AMOUNT	Break tea to get roughly 2 heaping teaspoons of "The Perfect Measure Spoon" (11MS-1370-)	Break tea to get roughly 1 heaping teaspoon of "Pot of Perfect Tea Spoon" (Item # 11MS-1155-)	Break tea to get roughly 2 heaping teaspoon of "Pot of Perfect Tea Spoon" (Item # 11MS-1155-)
MILD	2-3 min	2-3 min	2-3 min
MEDIUM	4-5 min	4-5 min	4-5 min
STRONG	6-7 min	6-7 min	6-7 min
MetroTea recommends 4-5 min			

SERVING RECOMMENDATIONS:

MILK	SUGAR	LEMON	MINT
OK	OK	OK	OK





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IDEAL BREWING TEMPERATURE: 100°C/212°F

HOT BREWING METHOD:

Bring filtered or freshly drawn cold water to a rolling boil. Break tea apart and place 1 slightly heaping teaspoon of loose tea for each 7-9oz/200-260ml of fluid volume in the teapot. Pour the boiling water into the teapot. Cover and let steep for 3-7 minutes according to taste (the longer the steeping time the stronger the tea).

ICED TEA BREWING METHOD (Pitcher): (To Make 1 Liter/Quart):

Place 6 slightly heaping teaspoons of loose tea or 6 tea bags into a teapot or heat resistant pitcher. Using filtered or freshly drawn cold water, boil and pour 11/4 cups/315ml over the tea. Steep for 5 minutes. Quarter fill a serving pitcher with cold water. Pour the tea into your serving pitcher straining the leaves or removing the tea bags. Add ice and top-up the pitcher with cold water. Garnish and sweeten to taste. A rule of thumb when preparing fresh brewed iced tea is to increase the strength of hot tea since it will be poured over ice and diluted with cold water. (Note: Some luxury quality teas may turn cloudy when poured over ice. This is a sign of luxury quality and nothing to worry about.)

ICED TEA BREWING METHOD (Individual Serving):

Place 1 slightly heaping teaspoon of loose tea or 1 tea bag into a teapot for each serving required. Using filtered or freshly drawn cold water, boil and pour 6-7oz/170-200ml per serving over the tea. Cover and let steep for 5 minutes. Add hot tea to a 12oz/375ml acrylic glass filled with ice, straining the leaves or removing the tea bags. Not all of the tea will fit, allowing for approximately an additional 1/2 serving. Sweeten and/or add lemon to taste. A rule of thumb when preparing fresh brewed iced tea is to increase the strength of hot tea since it will be poured over ice and diluted. (Note: Some luxury quality teas may turn cloudy when poured over ice. This is a sign of luxury quality and nothing to worry about!)

FOOD SAFETY ADVISORY: We strongly recommend using filtered or freshly drawn cold water brought to a rolling boil when brewing all types of tea. Today's water has been known to carry viruses, parasites and bacteria. Boiling the water will kill these elements and reduce the potential incidence of water-borne illnesses.

RECOMMENDATION: We recommend the use of our '1 Cup of Perfect Tea' measuring spoon (Item# 11MS-1370) for best results. Please contact Metropolitan Tea to place an order.

ANTIOXIDANT BENEFIT: For a greater antioxidant benefit brew longer and use more tea.



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