

Tea Culture in China

Take a minute to silently observe “Landscape: Tea sipping under willows” and then write down how the painting appeals to your five senses, using descriptive language.

Taste	Example: <i>I taste the bittersweet herbal tea the man is pouring into the teacup.</i>
See	
Hear	
Feel/Touch	
Smell	

What experiences have you personally had with tea? Have you ever tried drinking tea? If so, when and how often? Where might you see people drink tea? What special wares would they use?



Student Background Information

Tea culture became popular in China during the Tang dynasty (618–907 CE), although tea leaves had been grown in southern China long before that. By the Tang dynasty, drinking tea was an important part of everyone's daily lives all over China. People served tea to visiting guests, used tea as medicine, used tea to tell fortunes, and drank tea with their meals. In a tea ceremony, the size, shape, material, and color of the tea ware are all carefully selected in order to enhance the experience of drinking tea. In order to prepare and drink tea, people created new forms of art in ceramics and painted and wrote poems about tea. People traded these arts and rituals around tea.

Vocabulary

cosmopolitan: communities with representation of peoples from many different countries.

custom: an action or way of behaving that is widely practiced by a society.

divination: fortune-telling.

hospitality: welcoming and entertaining visitors.

social strata: the way a society classifies groups of people.

tea ware: equipment used for making and drinking tea.



Field of tea plants

2015

Photo by SathYeah, Wikimedia Commons



An example of a tea bowl

Bowl

China, Fujian province, Northern Song or Southern Song dynasty, 12th century

Stoneware with iron-pigmented glaze

3 7/16 x 7 9/16 in

Gift of Charles Lang Freer. Freer Gallery of Art, F1909.369