

Pu-erh disks and Pu-erh cakes (Bing Cha)

Photos courtesy of Danielle Beaudette©



Many farmers use the broad leaf varietal of Camellia. This varietal has been known to contain large amounts of Polyphenol and tannin which adds to the depth and sweetness in the tea. Pu-erh undergoes a secondary oxidation and fermentation process which is caused by organisms growing in the tea and the free-radical oxidation. Scientists have done many studies on this tea due to the naturally occurring probiotics (*Asper Nigellus* and sometimes *Eurotium Cristatum* found in other dark teas) that appear during the aging process. They have found that this tea contains a significant polyphenol, L-theanine, thearubigin and theaflavin content, as well as substantial polysaccharide compounds. These aid in promoting digestion of proteins and starch, and lowering cholesterol, hypertension, blood sugar, and stress. These complex flavonoids also aid in scavenging free radicals in our body which could lead to cancer-causing cells. The theaflavins and thearubigins



make up the major components in Pu-erh. Studies found that these have positive antibacterial effects on other intestinal bacteria and viruses.

There are many ways to describe the flavor and aroma of Pu-erh tea. It can have a rich and thick texture on the tongue and cheeks which is unique to this tea. It is smooth with an earthy aroma and a clean and smooth flavor. However, each Pu-erh tea has its own unique flavor with its own distinctive sweet undertones, bitterness and astringency.

The best way to store Pu-erh tea is in an area with good air flow away from

dark stagnant air. Keep it away from strong smells and do not place in a plastic bag because this could stop the aging process. The higher the humidity, the faster the tea will age, but this could also lead to the growth of mold. The humidity should be 60-85%. The tea should not be stored in an area where there is a high fluctuation in temperature.

To prepare Pu-erh tea, break the brick apart from the side using a Pu-erh knife or a firm letter opener. Use roughly 10 oz. of tea per cup.

Steep the spring water to a boil. Rinse the leaves for 12 seconds then pour off the liquor. Steep the tea a second time for roughly 3-4 minutes. Multiple steepings can be done on this tea.

To make this tea using the Chinese method, prepare the tea using the Gongfu style in Yixing tea ware or a Gaiwan.

While the processing of Pu-erh tea can be mysterious, we do know that Pu-erh tea contains probiotics that are believed to lead to better health. They aid in improving the intestinal function and help to maintain a strong immune system. Start every day with the smooth, rich flavor of Pu-erh tea!

For more information about Danielle read her bio on page 16 or call 603-249-9111. For more Tea Party ideas, information and her full list of tea offerings, scones flavors & clotted cream visit her website at www.TheCozyTeaCart.com. 