



WHAT DOES FIRST FLUSH MEAN WHEN HARVESTING PREMIUM TEA?

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To understand First Flush, you first need to know that there are six types of tea—White, Yellow, Green, Oolong, Black, and Dark. All six types of tea come from the same plant, *Camellia sinensis*. Within these types of tea, there are different grades and descriptions.

The plucking time for tea, also called harvesting, is determined by the climate of the region and country where it is grown. On all tea estates in every country, First Flush is the very first plucking of the tea plant's harvest season. 'Flush' refers to the first time of the year when the bushes put out new leaves and buds. In many regions, the timing of the First Flush can be in late February or early March. Typically, there are four harvest seasons: First Flush (March-April), Second Flush (May-June), Monsoon Flush (July-August), and Autumnal Flush (September-October). The bushes are then allowed to go dormant from November to the middle or end of February, although, again, this depends on the country, region, and climate where tea is grown.

When the First Flush is harvested, only the first two leaves and leaf bud are plucked. It is important to note that these leaves and buds are hand-harvested. Experienced tea pickers carefully select the most tender leaves and buds, plucking them delicately from the tea bushes. This is the traditional, ideal plucking standard for high-quality tea leaves, as it prioritizes only the purest, freshest, most tender, and flavorful parts of the tea plant. The result is a higher-quality, richer, and more aromatic brew. The two leaves and bud that are plucked provide a balance between the different taste characteristics of the bud and leaf, helping to avoid a rudimentary tea made from too many leaves.



The soft, new leaves of the First Flush offer the most concentrated, delicate flavor, the best balance of nutrients and essential oils, and a high amount of antioxidants, catechins, and amino acids, all contributing to the tea's health benefits.

Additionally, by hand-plucking the leaves in this style, it allows the tea plant to regenerate naturally.

Each consecutive Flush yields different flavor and aroma characteristics as the growing season progresses. The plucking of each Flush takes advantage of the newest growth on the tea bush and

reflects the seasonal effects on the leaves as the tea bush matures. Within each Flush, the batch of fresh leaves will be different from one day, one garden, and one season to the next. Once harvested, the leaves are processed, withered, rolled, and often oxidized in a technique that reflects the conditions of the season and of the plucked leaf. Therefore, no batch will ever be the same.





The tea-growing country that most commonly uses the term 'Flush' when describing their teas is India, which has four tea-growing regions: Darjeeling, Assam, Nilgiri, and Kumaon. The most sought-after First Flush teas are from Darjeeling.

About Darjeeling Flushes

Although it is one of the smallest tea-growing regions in India, Darjeeling is the region best known for yielding some of the most highly prized teas in the world. This is due to the challenging geography, rough terrain, and unique climate found there. The teas from this region are commonly classified by Flush and are the most famous teas in India. Because of the severe weather, the tea bushes here are dormant longer than in other growing regions, and this longer dormancy contributes to the unique flavors of the tea.



During the winter in this high, rocky region, the tea plants store nutrients in their roots. In early spring, the long cold winter gives way to warmer weather, and the leaves start to sprout their buds. The arrival of spring triggers the release of vital nutrients from the roots of the plant into the First Flush leaves. These soft, tender, and nutrient-rich spring leaves are the most aromatic and flavorful, making Darjeeling's First Flush tea enormously preferred. The mountainous soil of Darjeeling, the shady cloud cover, and unique processing methods define the incredible complexity of flavors found in First Flush Darjeeling tea.

First Flush

- Darjeeling First Flush tea is some of the most prized and expensive on the market. It is so special that it is considered the "Champagne" of teas by many tea connoisseurs, due to its similarities to white wine with light, intricate flavors. The fresh taste transports you to the scents and smells of a lush, green Himalayan spring garden.
- Darjeeling's tender First Flush leaves are very delicate, with layers of complexity. They present a floral, fresh flavor, with a more subtle, lighter, and drier aromatic brew. When processed, the First Flush teas are generally less oxidized to preserve the spring leaf flavor. This produces a lighter, greenish color in the brew, but it is still considered a black tea.
- It is best to enjoy the unique flavor of these fresh spring tea leaves with no additives (such as milk or sugar.) Experience the uniqueness of the tea's fruity, botanic notes with sweet floral undertones all on their own.
- The First Flush tea typically contains more nutrients, caffeine, antioxidants, and flavor because the plants have had more time to grow.

Visit our website to see our Darjeeling Glenburn Estate First Flush FTGFOP1 tea.





Second Flush

- The Second Flush produces larger, more mature leaves. During this period, leaves grow much faster than the early spring growth. For this reason, these leaves yield a stronger, more full-bodied, smoother flavor in the final brewed tea. Teas from this Flush are known for their muscatel notes (similar to fruity, dried raisins with subtle earthy undertones) and more bold, complex and assertive flavors. These teas are for tea drinkers who enjoy a more robust cup.

Visit our website to see our Organic Makaibari Darjeeling FTGFOP1 and Irish Breakfast (100% Assam) tea.

Monsoon Flush

- The Monsoon Flush yields large leaves that are stronger and bolder; however, they are less complex in flavor. They are also less refined than previous Flushes.

Autumnal Flush

- The Autumnal Flush produces an infusion that has a coppery glow and delicate flowery bouquet. The final brew is rich, full-bodied, nutty, and smooth in flavor. The malty undertones leave a long, lingering finish. During this period, the leaves grow slower, and the plant is forcing out the growth of the last Flush. It is considered the grand finale harvest before the bushes go to sleep for the winter!

Visit our website to see our Glenburn Autumn Crescendo FTGFOP1 tea.

Storing First Flush

First Flush teas will stay fresh for up to a year when properly stored in a cool, dark place in an airtight container. As with all teas, keep them away from light, moisture, and strong-smelling foods such as spices. Because First Flush teas are lightly oxidized, we recommend consuming them sooner rather than later to appreciate their fresh flavor.



Brewing First Flush

- Use fresh, pure, cold filtered water. Spring water is the best.
- Place 1 tsp. of tea in your infuser for up to a 12 oz cup.
- The water temperature for brewing should be between 180 to 200 degrees, and the tea should be steeped for 2 to 3 minutes. It's extremely important not to over-steep a First Flush tea, as it already has an astringent quality.

