

## Title:

Delicious Oolong Tea Blends

## Word Count:

894

## Summary:

If you're ready for something a little different at tea time, try a flavored oolong tea. Many Westerners have not experienced the delicious flavor of oolong tea in any form. With a different flavor than black, green or white teas, oolongs are a rare treat. When paired with another flavor, oolong teas are quite exceptional.

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## Keywords:

Tea, Oolong tea, fine tea

## Article Body:

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Oolong tea is very popular in Asia. It was first created in China and is still considered China's national tea. In the West, however, it is one of the least familiar tea varieties.

Oolong tea is also sometimes known as Wulong tea, after it's originator. According to Chinese legend, Wu Liang, a Chinese tea gardener, was busy collecting and processing tea leaves when he spotted a river deer. He stopped to kill and prepare the deer and it interrupted his tea processing for the day. He forgot to dry out the leaves, and only remembered them the next day.

By this time it had begun to change color, and Wu Liang was afraid it had gone bad, but decided to finish drying it anyway. After completing the drying process, he made himself a cup and found that he had created a very flavorful and aromatic tea - and oolong was born.

Oolong tea, in terms of processing, falls somewhere between green and black tea.

Oolong tea is semi-fermented, meaning that it does go through a fermentation process, but for a shorter time than black tea.

Tea leaves for oolong tea are picked early in the day and then dried indoors to promote fermenting. But, the fermentation process must be stopped when the leaves are 30% red and 70% green. Once fermentation has stopped, the tea leaves are rubbed, which releases the aroma, flavor and texture. Finally, the leaves are dried using charcoal, before they are graded for quality and sent for packaging.

Most oolong tea is grown in the Fujian region of China, but some is grown in Taiwan, and a small amount is grown in the Darjeeling region of India and in Vietnam.

In Taiwan, oolong tea is referred to as Formosa tea, in reference to the country's original name. Formosa tea is sometimes fermented for a shorter period of time than in China; sometimes the leaves are only about 15% fermented, compared to the typical 30%. These Taiwanese oolong teas are known as "pouchongs". In addition, Taiwanese oolong teas are dried in the sun rather than indoors.

Oolong teas have a very fruity flavor, often with smoky or toasted undertones. They are typically very fragrant teas, often with a floral aroma. Because of the natural fruitiness of oolong teas, they are often blended with other fruit flavors. The combination of oolong tea with other fruits only enhances the oolong's natural flavor. Some of the most common blends of oolong include:

Coconut Oolong - This oolong tea has a very tropical taste. The combination of the fruity oolong or pouchong tea with the sweetness of coconut creates a light and sweet tea. Because it is light and flavorful, this tea is equally delicious hot or cold.

Orange Oolong - Oolong tea is often blended with orange blossoms or bergamot oil. Orange blossom oolong will provide a very light and sweet orange flavor to the tea. Oolong tea flavored with bergamot oil will be bolder and more flavorful. Bergamot oil comes from the very citrusy bergamot orange and is the flavor used in all Earl Grey teas. Hence, you'll see this tea labeled as Earl Grey oolong.

Orchid Oolong - This is a very rare oolong, scented with real orchid petals. It can only be produced at certain times of year, when the right orchids are blooming. It produces a very fragrant and lightly sweet tea. When buying this tea, be certain that it has been flavored with real orchid petals rather than an

artificial flavoring.

Peach Oolong - Many people describe the fruitiness of oolong tea as resembling the flavor of peaches. So, adding peach pieces to oolong tea is a natural choice. The addition simply enhances oolong's natural aroma and flavor.

Almond Blossom Oolong - Oolong tea flavored with almond blossom and slivers of almond provides a light and sweet tea with just a hint of almond flavor.

You may also find other blends of oolong tea. With its natural fruity flavor, oolong tea can combine well with nearly any fruit and with many other botanicals, as well. Drinking flavored oolong teas can provide another taste dimension to the already flavorful taste of oolong. Additional flavors and aromas make the tea go well at different times of the day and with different foods.

Consider for example, choosing a spirited flavored oolong like Earl Grey oolong for a mid day meal, or a glass of iced coconut oolong on a hot afternoon. A mild almond blossom oolong can provide a perfect way to wind down after a stressful day.

Oolong teas are some of the most versatile teas available. You may find them a bit harder to locate and somewhat expensive, but they are certainly worth the effort and the expense. Oolong is a tea with many dimensions and one that provides some of the most complex and subtle flavor combinations. Spend a little time experiencing the many different flavors available in oolong tea. You're certain to find quite a few that you'll want to enjoy again and again.