

**Title:**

What are the Essentials of High Quality Loose LeafTea?

**Word Count:**

646

**Summary:**

All tea comes from the plant Camellia sinensis but there is where the similarity between high quality loose leaf tea and other, lesser quality ends. From the time the tea leaves are plucked until the the time the consumer tatses the brew, a number of critical events affect the tea experience.

**Keywords:**

Loose leaf tea, loose tea, quality tea, CTC, orthodox tea , tea cupping, e-commerce, tea manufacturing, oxidation, tea plucking, tea growing conditions, China tea, India tea, Sri Lanka tea, Taiwan tea

**Article Body:**

Demand for high quality loose leaf tea is experiencing strong growth and for those interested in high quality loose tea, more information will aid in decision making. Critical elements in the process include:

Source of the Tea

Manufacturing Processes

Purchasing, Quality Control and Customer Service

Source of the Tea

All tea comes from the plant Camellia sinensis but there is where the similarity between high quality loose leaf tea and other, lesser quality ends. From the time the tea leaves are plucked until the time the consumer tastes the brew, a number of critical events affect the tea experience.

High quality loose leaf teas are carefully selected as only the finest of these rare orthodox teas, which are processed slowly and hand-crafted with extreme care.

Tea, like wine, is harvested and processed into the final product on the grounds of the garden or estate. The taste and quality of any tea varietal depends upon

the specific growing conditions. Factors such as altitude, climate, soil, weather, and plucking season all affect the final product.

To produce just one pound of quality loose leaf tea, it takes approximately 3,000 hand plucked leaves. Only the most tender leaves and young buds are selected. After the leaves are picked, the precise art of tea making begins.

### Manufacturing Processes

Tea is manufactured by two different processes.

Most ordinary tea is machine processed by the C.T.C. method (crush, tear, curl). The resulting small, broken pieces are used in tea bags or iced tea concentrates. Less than 2% of the world's tea is of superior quality, hand-processed in the classic, time-honored method known as orthodox manufacture.

High quality suppliers are dedicated to offering outstanding, whole-leaf teas of the greatest quality and finesse. Whole-leaf varietals retain the subtle nuances of flavor so prized by discriminating palates throughout the centuries. The highest quality loose teas are hand-plucked and meticulously crafted to enhance leaf character, aroma, color, clarity, body, complexity, and above all, flavor. Connoisseurs will find no soggy paper tea bags and no trendy herbals from high quality loose tea suppliers; only real tea from the Camellia Sinensis bush. And, of course, only the finest.

### Purchasing, Quality Control and Customer Service

Access to high quality loose leaf tea is the final element. Most loose leaf teas are not available in retail outlets. Nevertheless, quality tea is easily available through e-commerce outlets on the internet.

Increasingly e-commerce over the internet has proven to be an efficient and easy way to purchase quality products and those e-commerce sites that are customer friendly also offer convenient and low cost home delivery. Loose leaf tea is ideally suited to e-commerce because it is light and easy to transport.

When evaluating e-commerce sites, the consumer should consider those sites that are interactive, easy to use and offer rich features such as auto shipping, multiple destination shipments, gift shipments and delivery flexibility.

The loose leaf tea experience is all about quality and quality does not end with manufacturing. Those suppliers that are truly dedicated to quality will maintain quality control over each shipment received from the producing tea garden.

Since almost all quality loose leaf tea comes from other countries such as China, India, Sri Lanka, Taiwan and others, choose a supplier who cups or tastes each shipment before acceptance. This measure of quality control will guarantee consistent quality but most loose leaf tea suppliers skip this important step. Check with a potential supplier to determine their cupping commitment.

In addition to quality control, customer service is a critical element in the loose tea relationship. Since the purchase of high quality loose tea tends to be a long term relationship, consideration of the needs of the customer and customer satisfaction is paramount.

The best suppliers have a culture of customer service, open lines of communication to customer service personnel and solicit feedback from customers as a way to maintain consistent quality.