
Green tea — Vocabulary

Thé vert — Vocabulaire

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

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For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), see www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html.

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 34, *Food products*, Subcommittee SC 8, *Tea*.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html.

Introduction

Tea is grown and manufactured in numerous countries around the world and is blended or drunk in many more. Green tea is produced using fresh tea leaves, which can be from more than one garden or region. There are many factors that impact the flavour of green tea, including the water used for brewing, the preparation method of the liquor and individual tastes.

The two International Standards for black tea, which provide a vocabulary and requirements, ISO 6078 and ISO 3720, respectively, were first published in the 1980s and are still used today, with the latter having been revised several times. They have played an important role in improving the global black tea trade.

Currently, an increasing number of consumers enjoy drinking green tea not only for its impact on health, but also for its special appearance and flavour. ISO 11287 provides the requirements for green tea, and this document provides the accompanying vocabulary. It has been developed primarily for use by the tea trade, to enable clear and open communication, and also to ensure that consumers are not misled.

The quality of green tea is usually assessed by professional tea tasters, whose judgement is based on their experience of tea evaluation, the conditions of the producing area and the preferences of the consuming country. Five factors are considered when evaluating the quality of green tea: the appearance of the dry tea leaf (such as shape, colour, cleanliness and evenness), the appearance and the odour of the infused leaf, and the colour and the taste of the tea liquor. Usually, a chemical analysis of tea is undertaken only when it is specifically requested or abnormal characteristics are exhibited.

This document comprises a selection of terms used in the tea trade all over the world, covering not only the processing of green tea but also the essential aspects of assessing green tea for commerce.

Many of the terms in current use for green tea are synonymous or very similar in meaning, and considerable divergences in usage exist.

Accordingly, this document aims to establish recognized definitions for the terms, and thus eliminate differences in usage, and also to encourage a reduction in the number of terms used overall.

The terms are classified as follows:

- classification of green tea (see [3.1](#));
- dry leaf:
 - appearance (see [3.2.1](#));
 - colour (see [3.2.2](#));
- quality of liquor:
 - taste (see [3.3.1](#));
 - colour of liquor (see [3.3.2](#));
- infused leaf:
 - appearance (see [3.4.1](#));
 - aroma (see [3.4.2](#)).

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Green tea — Vocabulary

1 Scope

This document defines terms for classifying and assessing green tea for commerce.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

3 Terms and definitions

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>

3.1 Classification of green tea

3.1.1

green tea

tea derived solely and exclusively, and produced from the leaves, buds and tender stems of the species *Camellia sinensis* (Linnaeus) O. Kuntze, known to be suitable for making tea for consumption as a beverage

Note 1 to entry: The processing of green tea consists of two parts: first, manufacturing and then refining. In the first, tea is manufactured through withering, fixation, shaping (rolling or others) and drying. In the refining process, the products are made by mixing, sifting, stalk extraction and fanning, etc.

3.1.1.1

pan-fired green tea

green tea whose drying process after rolling is through a hot machine to achieve further shaping and final dryness

3.1.1.1.1

ball-shaped pan-fired green tea

green tea manufactured with a special process for rolling up the leaf tightly and making green tea ball-shaped

3.1.1.1.2

long-shaped pan-fired green tea

long-shaped fired green tea with a long strip appearance manufactured with a special process of twisting

3.1.1.1.3

flat-shaped pan-fired green tea

pan-fried green tea manufactured with a special process for flattening leaf and making green tea flat

3.1.1.2

roasted green tea

green tea whose final drying is by hot air

3.1.1.3

sun-dried green tea

green tea dried in moderate sunlight

3.1.1.4

steamed green tea

green tea whose enzymes are inactivated and fixed by steaming

3.2 Dry leaf

3.2.1 Appearance

3.2.1.1

bent

dry leaf that is not straight with slightly curved

3.2.1.2

bird tongue-like

small and flat buds similar to the tongue of a tit

3.2.1.3

blister

swelling on the surface of dry leaf caused by too rapid removal of moisture during manufacturing

3.2.1.4

blunt

dry leaf with no sharp tip

3.2.1.5

bold

large and open leaf

3.2.1.6

clean and neat

evenly sorted without any stalk, fibre or extraneous matter

3.2.1.7

coarse

<dry leaf> containing an abnormal amount of old and rough leaves

3.2.1.8

consistent

consisting of leaf with the same grade and comprising pieces of approximately equal size

3.2.1.9

curly

rolled leaf with a curled appearance

3.2.1.10

dusty

containing an abnormal amount of small tea particles and/or dust

3.2.1.11

fannings

predominantly broken smaller leaf particles

3.2.1.12

fibrous

containing a noticeable amount of shredded stalks and fibres

3.2.1.13**flaky**

hard flat leaf due to rolling with withered hard or coarse leaf

3.2.1.14**flat**

dry leaf spreading out on a single plane

3.2.1.15**grape-nutty**

rolled into balls or granules of equal size during the manufacturing process

3.2.1.16**hairy**

containing a noticeable amount of thin hair

3.2.1.17**inconsistent**

improperly sorted with different sized leaves

3.2.1.18**loose**

not tightly curled or rolled

3.2.1.19**lump**

loose granular tea with dull yellow colour

Note 1 to entry: It is usually manufactured using coarse leaves.

3.2.1.20**narrow**

small size in width

Note 1 to entry: Applicable principally to flat-shaped tea.

3.2.1.21**needle**

long and thin similar to the leaf of an evergreen pine tree

3.2.1.22**open**

<dry leaf> not curled but unfolded

3.2.1.23**orchid-like**

flowerlike shape with one bud and two leaves, pliable nature

3.2.1.24**refined**

uniform in colour, size and texture

Note 1 to entry: This is not limited to quality attributes.

3.2.1.25**rough**

irregular and coarse appearance

3.2.1.26**rounded piece**

abnormal amount of small rolled ball-shaped leaves similar to rope

3.2.1.27

shotty

very tightly rolled similar to gunpowder

3.2.1.28

short and broken

containing a noticeable amount of small pieces and short strips

3.2.1.29

small

less than normal of the grade

3.2.1.30

smooth

flat, even and bright

3.2.1.31

spiral

curved and twisted

3.2.1.32

stalky

containing an abnormal amount of stalks

3.2.1.33

straight

even and not bent

Note 1 to entry: Opposite to *bent* ([3.2.1.1](#)).

3.2.1.34

sturdy

robust, tender and heavy

3.2.1.35

swallow's tail

similar to the tail of a swallow with an angle between bud and leaf

3.2.1.36

tadpole shape

round with a tail at one end

3.2.1.37

tight

rolled firmly during manufacturing

Note 1 to entry: Opposite to *loose* ([3.2.1.18](#)).

3.2.1.38

wiry

rolled tightly with a noticeable amount of tips

3.2.1.39

tips

tight leaf with buds or shoots

3.2.1.40

tippy

containing noticeably high levels of buds

3.2.2 Colour

3.2.2.1

brown

<dry leaf> undesirable umber leaf colour, due to bad manufacturing

Note 1 to entry: It is also applicable to the colour of infused leaf.

3.2.2.2

black

blackish

dark

undesirable colour due to aeration not being stopped in-process

3.2.2.3

bright

glossy

<dry leaf> shiny, light reflecting surface

Note 1 to entry: One of the desirable characteristics of tea. Opposite to *dull* (3.2.2.5).

3.2.2.4

deep green

dark and vivid green colour

Note 1 to entry: It is also applicable to the colour of infused leaf.

3.2.2.5

dull

<dry leaf> dim in colour

Note 1 to entry: Opposite to *bright* (3.2.2.3).

3.2.2.6

dull green

undesirable green colour of dry leaf without glossiness, caused by improper fixation or made from dewy leaves

Note 1 to entry: It is also applicable to the colour of infused leaf.

3.2.2.7

jade green

desirable colour of leaf that is deep green, fresh and vivid

3.2.2.8

light green

desirable green colour of dry leaf

Note 1 to entry: It is usually found in tea made from bud or tender leaves.

Note 2 to entry: It is also applicable to the colour of infused leaf.

3.2.2.9

not uniform

mixed leaves with different colours

3.2.2.10

pale

lacks intensity of colour

3.2.2.11

red

reddish

undesirable colour of leaf, indicative of poor fixation

3.2.2.12

silvery

glossy white/chalky colour

3.2.2.13

taupe

pale and brownish-grey colour, lacking glossiness

3.2.2.14

uniform

same colour throughout

3.2.2.15

yellowish

tea of yellow colour

Note 1 to entry: It is also applicable to the colour of infused leaf.

3.2.2.16

yellowish green

<dry leaf> mixed green colour with a little yellow

Note 1 to entry: It can be found in many green teas.

Note 2 to entry: It is also applicable to the colour of infused leaf.

3.3 Quality of liquor

3.3.1 Taste

3.3.1.1

astringent

drying, pungent sensation

3.3.1.2

bakey

noticeable characteristic in liquor due to high temperature during drying

3.3.1.3

bitter

unpleasant taste of liquor with a harsh and pungent after taste

3.3.1.4

body

liquor possessing fullness and strength

Note 1 to entry: to entry. The opposite of *thin* ([3.3.1.24](#)).

3.3.1.5

brisk

live and vigorous taste in liquor

Note 1 to entry: The opposite to flat or soft.

3.3.1.6**burnt**

<liquor> unpleasant taste due to abnormally high temperatures during manufacturing

Note 1 to entry: A degree worse than *bakey* ([3.3.1.2](#)).

3.3.1.7**character**

desirable quality in liquor easily recognizable from its origin or particular district

3.3.1.8**clean**

pure

<liquor> liquor taste that has no foreign flavour

3.3.1.9**coarse**

rough

<liquor> undesirable liquor of harshness due to the presence of mature leaves, stalks or fibres in dry leaf

3.3.1.10**contaminated**

liquor with an abnormal flavour caused by a foreign odorous substance such as a spice, fruit, oil, herb, etc.

3.3.1.11**flavoury**

intense taste and aroma, usually associated with tea grown in high mountain regions

3.3.1.12**fully fired**

liquor slightly over-fired during manufacturing

Note 1 to entry: A degree weaker than *bakey* ([3.3.1.2](#)).

3.3.1.13**grassy**

taste like fresh leaves

3.3.1.14**mellow**

liquor with a pure, rich taste

3.3.1.15**musty**

<liquor> contaminated by mould or due to improper storage

3.3.1.16**plain**

neutral

taste which is neither rich nor with any distinctive unpleasant or negative characteristics

3.3.1.17**pungent**

liquor with a marked briskness or astringency without bitterness

3.3.1.18**round**

smooth, full and mellow

3.3.1.19

smoky

<liquor> over-burned odour or taste, usually caused by a defect in drying

3.3.1.20

stale

<liquor> losing freshness due to long storage or storage under bad conditions

3.3.1.21

strong

liquor with powerful tea characteristics

Note 1 to entry: The liquor is not necessarily thick.

3.3.1.22

sweet after taste

desirable taste of liquor with a sweet taste after drinking

3.3.1.23

thick

liquor with abundant substance

Note 1 to entry: The liquor is not necessarily strong.

3.3.1.24

thin

weak

<liquor> undesirable taste, lacking in thickness and strength

3.3.1.25

umami

desirable rich taste of green tea liquor due to high levels of amino acids

3.3.1.26

washy

thin, watery and less characteristic

3.3.1.27

woody

containing an abnormal amount of stalks in tea

3.3.2 Colour of liquor

3.3.2.1

apricot green

desirable clear and bright green with yellowish colour

3.3.2.2

bright

<liquor> clean and vivid in colour

Note 1 to entry: It is a desirable characteristic, usually associated with careful manufacture.

3.3.2.3

brown

<liquor> undesirable dull colour due to incorrect fixation during manufacturing

3.3.2.4

clear

liquor with a pure and clean colour, without any precipitates

3.3.2.5**dark green**

colour like emerald

Note 1 to entry: The degree of colour is deeper than green.

3.3.2.6**dull**

<liquor> undesirable colour that is neither clean nor lively

Note 1 to entry: The opposite of *bright* (3.3.2.2).

3.3.2.7**green**

most popular natural colour of leaf found in nature

3.3.2.8**muddy**

dull with abundant fine particles suspended

3.3.2.9**precipitate**

matter that settles to the bottom of liquor

Note 1 to entry: It is usually found in a liquor containing a large amount of tea dust.

3.3.2.10**yellowish green**

<liquour> colour of liquor that is more yellowy than normal green

3.4 Infused leaf**3.4.1 Appearance****3.4.1.1****bright**

<infused leaf> desirable and live colour of infused leaf

3.4.1.2**broken**

infused leaf that is crushed and not complete

3.4.1.3**coarse**

<infused leaf> infused leaf that is hard and mature

Note 1 to entry: It is usually found in tea made from matured leaves with noticeable stalks or fibres.

3.4.1.4**consistent**

infused leaf that is regular in physical appearance

Note 1 to entry: One of the desirable characteristics in infused leaves.

3.4.1.5**dark**

infused leaf with brown colour and dull

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3.4.1.6

dull

<infused leaf> low reflection of light from the infused leaf

Note 1 to entry: The opposite to *bright* (3.4.1.1).

3.4.1.7

fat

infused leaf that is tender, thick and rich in substance

3.4.1.8

fine

infused leaf of high quality consisting of lots of buds and young leaves

3.4.1.9

fresh green

infused leaf that is green, clear, bright and alive

3.4.1.10

hard

infused leaf that is firm to the touch

Note 1 to entry: It is usually found in coarse leaf.

3.4.1.11

inconsistent

infused leaf that is mixed in different tendernesses, sizes, thicknesses, shapes and colours

Note 1 to entry: The opposite to *consistent* (3.4.1.4).

3.4.1.12

open

<infused leaf> infused leaf that is unfolded

3.4.1.13

red stalk and leaf

infused leaf with a red colour and red stalk caused by improper fixation during manufacturing

3.4.1.14

scorch spot

infused leaf with a black or yellow spot that is burnt on the surface

3.4.1.15

soft

infused leaf that is comfortable and not firm to touch

Note 1 to entry: The opposite to *hard* (3.4.1.10).

3.4.1.16

thin

<infused leaf> infused leaf that is neither thick nor rich in substance

Note 1 to entry: The opposite to *fat* (3.4.1.7).

3.4.2 Aroma

3.4.2.1

burnt

<infused leaf> undesirable characteristic due to an abnormally high temperature during firing