

# A little guide for identifying Chinese teas

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Greetings, fellow tea lovers.

In this article, I will show you how to identify some Chinese teas from packages, as some of them are written in this specific language. I simply do this because I'm in love with Chinese tea, and I'm a Language freaky, so I hope this would be helpful to all of you.

In advance, I will say I know nothing about the Chinese language, and this is after watching so many tea packages, and associating the Chinese words to certain teas. Moreover, this will be divided according to the tea type. Also, here I will list the most famous/best sold teas of each category, because if I list all teas, this article will never end. So, let's get into it.

To begin with, this symbol: 茶 (Chá), literally means: tea, and it's always in the end of some tea's names. So, to know which tea is in most cases, look for this symbol first.

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## Chinese teas

### Black Tea (红茶 — Hóng Chá)

Known in China as **red tea**, due to the beverage's liquor color, here in the western we call it black tea due to the color of the leaves, but both are the same.

- 祁门红茶 (Qí Mén Hóng Chá): This is what we know as Keemun.
- 滇红茶 (Diān Hóng Chá): This is the Dian Hong, or black tea from Yunnan.
- 正山小种 (Zhèng Shān Xiǎo Zhǒng): This is what we know as Lapsang Souchong. Very famous due to its distinctive smoky flavor.
- 九曲红梅 (Jiǔ Qū Hóng Méi): Also known as Nine Bend Red Plum.
- 金骏眉 (Jīn Jùn Méi): A black tea from the Wuyi Mountains, with golden tips in leaves.
- 野生红茶 (Yě Shēng Hóng Chá): Also known as Wild Red Tea.
- 英德红茶 (Yīngdé Hóng Chá): A black tea from the Guangdong province.

### Green Tea (绿茶 — Lǜ Chá)

- 碧螺春 (Bì Luó Chūn): Known also as Green Snail Spring. Leaves are tightly rolled, resembling snail shells.
- 龙井 (Lóng Jǐng): Known as Dragon Well. Leaves are flat, spear shaped. It's also known as 西湖龙井 (Xī Hú Lóng Jǐng), or West Lake Longjing.
- 六安瓜片 (Lù'ān Guā Piàn): Known as Melon Seed.
- 太平猴魁 (Tài Píng Hóu Kuí): The green tea with the longest leaves.
- 安吉白茶 (Ān Jí Bái Chá): This tea has leaves long and narrow with a pale green to whitish color. The name can be deceiving because: 白茶 (Bái Chá) literally means White Tea, but this ain't such tea, it's indeed a very regarded Green Tea.
- 恩施玉露 (Ēn Shī Yù Lù): Known as Jade Dew. The only Chinese green tea that is fixated via steam, which color liquor resembles a jade stone.
- 竹叶青 (Zhú Yè Qīng): This tea comes from Mount Emei (峨眉山, Emei Shān), that's why it's also known as 峨眉山竹叶青 (Emei Shān Zhú Yè Qīng).

- 毛尖 (Máo Jiān): Also known as Maojian. It is one of the most famous and highly regarded green teas. It's known for its slender, pointed leaves and fresh, delicate flavor. It can come from many different places, and has some varieties, so try to pay attention to the last symbols.
  - 信阳毛尖 (Xìnyáng Máo Jiān): Made in Henan. Known for its tender, tightly curled leaves with a slight white fuzz. The tea has a fresh, brisk flavor with a delicate, sweet aftertaste.
  - 霍山毛尖 (Huòshān Máo Jiān): Made in Anhui. The leaves are slender and needle-like, with a fresh, slightly sweet flavor and a hint of nuttiness. It has a bright green liquor.
  - 古丈毛尖 (Gǔzhàng Máo Jiān): Made in Hunan. The tea has a mild, fresh taste with a sweet, lingering aftertaste. The leaves are small, pointed, and have a deep green color.
  - 青阳毛尖 (Qīngyáng Máo Jiān): Also made in Anhui. Known for its fine, needle-like leaves and fresh, vegetal taste. The tea has a bright, clear liquor with a slight floral aroma.
- 毛峰 (Máo Fēng): Known as Maofeng. This is another of the most famous green teas in China. As it happens with Maojian, it can come from many different places, whose names are in the beginning of tea's name.
  - 黄山毛峰 (Huáng Shān Máo Fēng): Known as Yellow Mountain Fur Peak, this tea is from the Yellow Mountain (Huangshan) region in Anhui province. This can also be found as: 黄山绿茶 (Huáng Shān Lǜ Chá), or Yellow Mountain Green Tea.
  - 峨眉毛峰 (Éméi Máo Fēng): Made in Sichuan. Also known as 峨眉山毛峰 (Éméi Shān Máo Fēng), it's another regarded Maofeng tea.
  - 九华毛峰 (Jiǔ Huá Máo Fēng): From Anhui.
  - 蒙顶毛峰 (Méng Dǐng Máo Fēng): Also from Sichuan, more specifically from the Mending Mountain..
- 雀舌 (Què Shé): Known as Sparrow's Tongue. The leaves are small and resemble the tongue of a sparrow. This tea is highly prized for its delicate flavor and fine quality, and it is grown primarily in the Emei Mountain region in Sichuan Province.
- 蒙顶甘露 (Méng Dǐng Gān Lù): Known as Mengding Ganlu. It originates from Mengding Mountain in Sichuan Province.
- 雾牛早 (Wù Niú Zǎo): Known as Wu Niu Zao. This tea comes from Wuniu in Zhejiang Province. It is an early spring tea with a fresh, crisp taste and tightly rolled leaves.
- 阳羡雪芽 (Yáng Xiān Xuě Yá): Known as Yang Xian Snow Buds. This tea is produced in the Yangxian region of Jiangsu Province. The leaves are fine and tender, resembling snow buds, and the tea is known for its light, sweet, and refreshing flavor.
- 茉莉花茶 (Mò Lì Huā Chá): It's the green tea scented with jasmine flowers; this can also be a blend of green tea and jasmine flowers.
- 茉莉龙珠 (Mò Lì Lóng Zhū): Known as Dragon Pearls, basically green tea leaves rolled and scented with jasmine flowers.
- 碧潭飘雪 (Bì Tán Piāo Xuě): Known as Snowy Mountain Jian. It is a blend of green tea with jasmine flowers, similar to 茉莉龙珠 (Mò Lì Lóng Zhū) but more loosely combined.

## Oolong Tea (乌龙茶 — Wūlóng Chá)

- 铁观音 (Tiě Guān Yīn): Known as Iron Maiden/Goddess of Mercy, this is the most common oolong tea. During the production process, this tea can be highly, or lightly roasted, depending on the level of roasting this tea can be classified as a dark, or regular oolong respectively.

- 桂花乌龙茶 (Guīhuā Wūlóng Chá): Known as osmanthus oolong. This is a blend like 茉莉花茶 (Mò Lì Huā Chá), in which rolled oolong leaves are scented, and in some cases mixed, with osmanthus flowers.
- 黑乌龙 (Hēi Wūlóng): This is the name of a category given to those oolongs with a high level of oxidation. It is also known as Dark Oolong. The most famous are Wuyi Rock Teas, and the Dancongs.
  - 武夷岩茶 (Wǔ Yí Yán Chá): Known as Wuyi Rock Tea, in this there are some wide known teas, such as:
    - 大红袍 (Dà Hóng Páo): It's one of the most valued oolongs, and one of the most famous rock tea.
    - 肉桂 (Ròu Guì): Known as Cinnamon tea, due to the strong cinnamon notes in this tea, and the way leaves are produced.
    - 水仙 (Shuǐ Xiān): Also known as Water Sprite. The tea is less oxidized than some other Wuyi Rock Teas, giving it a lighter flavor profile.
  - 鳳凰單枞 (Fèng Huáng Dān Cōng): Known as Phoenix Dancong. One of the dark oolongs, by the dark color of the leaves. It has multiple natural aromas (香 — Xiāng), some of them are:
    - 鴨屎香 (Yā Shǐ Xiāng) - Duck Shit Aroma\*.
    - 蜜蘭香 (Mì Lán Xiāng) - Honey Orchid Aroma.
    - 桂花香 (Guì Huā Xiāng) - Osmanthus Aroma.
    - 玉蘭香 (Yù Lán Xiāng) - Magnolia Aroma.
    - 杏仁香 (Xìng Rén Xiāng) - Almond Aroma.
    - 姜花香 (Jiāng Huā Xiāng) - Ginger Flower Aroma.
    - 柚花香 (Yòu Huā Xiāng) - Pomelo Flower Aroma.
    - 芝蘭香 (Zhī Lán Xiāng) - Orchid Aroma.
    - 桂皮香 (Guì Pí Xiāng) - Cinnamon Aroma.
    - 夜來香 (Yè Lái Xiāng) - Night-Blooming Jasmine Aroma.
    - 茉莉香 (Mò Lì Xiāng) - Jasmine Aroma.
    - 黃枝香 (Huáng Zhī Xiāng) - Gardenia Aroma.
    - 蜜桃香 (Mì Táo Xiāng) - Honey Peach Aroma.
    - 百合香 (Bǎi Hé Xiāng) - Lily Aroma.
    - 水仙香 (Shuǐ Xiān Xiāng) - Narcissus Aroma.
    - 杏花香 (Xìng Huā Xiāng) - Apricot Blossom Aroma.
    - 老仙翁 (Lǎo Xiān Wēng) - Old Immortal Man.\*\*
    - 八仙 (Bā Xiān) - Eight Immortals.\*\*\*
    - 凹富后 (Āo Fù Hòu).
    - 宋種 (Sòng Zhǒng) - Song Cultivar.
    - 大烏葉 (Dà Wū Yè) - Big Dark Leaf.

## White Tea (白茶 — Bái Chá)

- 白牡丹 (Bái Mǔ Dān): One of the most known white teas in the world, due to its high quality.
- 白毫銀針 (Bái Háo Yín Zhēn): Known as Silver Needles.
- 壽眉 (Shòu Méi): Known as Longevity Eyebrow, this is widely used for aging like pu-erh tea.
- 月光白 (Yuè Guāng Bái): Known as Moonlight White.

## Yellow Tea (黄茶 — Huáng Chá)

- 君山银针 (Jūn Shān Yín Zhēn): Known as Junshan Silver Needle, this tea is produced on Junshan Island in Hunan province.
- 蒙顶黄芽 (Méng Dǐng Huáng Yá): Known as Mengding Yellow Buds, this tea is from Mengding Mountain in Sichuan province.

## Dark Tea (黑茶 — Hēi Chá)

Dark teas, like pu-erh, are known for the aging and fermentation processes that tea leaves are put through, so all dark teas are basically aged-teas. This is the reason why the color liquor of all this kind of tea is dark.

- Pu-erh Tea (普洱茶 — Pǔ'ěr Chá): This is the most known of dark teas, and it's mainly made in the Yunnan province, some of them are:
    - 生普洱 (Shēng Pǔ'ěr): Known as raw pu-erh. This type is naturally aged over a long period, resulting in a complex flavor profile.
    - 熟普洱 (Shú Pǔ'ěr): Known as ripe pu-erh. This type undergoes an accelerated fermentation process to mimic the aging of raw Pu-erh.
    - 柑普洱 (Gān Pǔ'ěr): Known as tangerine pu-erh. This is a blend where ripe pu-erh leaves are stuffed in an entire dry tangerine peel for both flavors and aromas to combine.
  - 茯砖茶 (Fú Zhuān Chá): Fu brick tea is notable for its unique "golden flowers" (a beneficial mold called *Eurotium cristatum*) that grow within the compressed tea brick.
  - 六堡茶 (Liù Bǎo Chá): Mainly made in the Hunan province.
  - 老青茶 (Lǎo Qīng Chá): This is a traditional dark tea from Hubei province.
  - 黑砖茶 (Hēi Zhuān Chá): Also known as: Black brick tea. This is another well-known Hei Cha variety from Hunan province.
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## Chinese regions that produce tea

To begin with, China in Chinese is 中国 (Zhōngguó), so many teas have this in the packages to indicate where the tea is from. In addition, many Chinese teas have the name of the province, or region where they were produced in the beginning of their names, the most renowned Chinese provinces, and some of the relevant places in the tea market are:

### ★ Yunnan (云南)

- Pu'er (普洱市)
- Xishuangbanna (西双版纳)
- Lincang (临沧市)
- Menghai (勐海县)
- Fengqing (凤庆县)
- Jingmai (景迈山)
- Baoshan (保山市)
- Yiwu (易武镇)
- Simao (思茅区)
- Wuliangshan (无量山)

## ★ Fujian (福建)

- Anxi (安溪县)
- Wuyishan (武夷山)
- Fuding (福鼎市)
- Zhenghe (政和县)
- Tanyang (坦洋)
- Fuzhou (福州市)
- Jianyang (建阳市)
- Shuiji (水吉镇)
- Songxi (松溪县)
- Yongchun (永春县)

## ★ Zhejiang (浙江)

- Hangzhou (杭州)
- Anji (安吉)
- Xinchang (新昌县)
- Wenzhou (温州)
- Jinhua (金华)
- Shaoxing (绍兴)
- Quzhou (衢州)
- Taishun (泰顺县)
- Lin'an (临安)
- Kaihua (开化县)

## ★ Anhui (安徽)

- Huangshan (黄山)
- Qimen (祁门县)
- Lu'an (六安市)
- Jing County (泾县)
- Taiping (太平县)
- Huoshan (霍山县)
- She County (歙县)
- Xiuning (休宁县)
- Shitai (石台县)
- Yi County (黟县)

## ★ Hunan (湖南)

- Anhua (安化县)
- Shaoyang (邵阳市)
- Changsha (长沙市)
- Yueyang (岳阳市)
- Zhangjiajie (张家界市)
- Cili (慈利县)
- Sangzhi (桑植县)
- Baojing (保靖县)
- Guzhang (古文县)
- Shimen (石门县)
- Junshan Island (君山岛)

## ★ Jiangsu (江苏)

- Suzhou (苏州市)

- Nanjing (南京市)
- Liyang (溧阳市)
- Yixing (宜兴市)
- Dongshan (东山镇)
- Yangzhou (扬州市)
- Xuzhou (徐州市)
- Lianyungang (连云港市)
- Nantong (南通市)
- Changzhou (常州市)

## ★ Guangdong (广东)

- Yingde (英德市)
- Chaozhou (潮州市)
- Fenghuang Mountain (凤凰山)
- Meizhou (梅州市)
- Guangzhou (广州市)
- Shaoguan (韶关市)
- Shantou (汕头市)
- Huizhou (惠州市)
- Zhaoqing (肇庆市)
- Qingyuan (清远市)

## ★ Guangxi (广西)

- Guilin (桂林市)
- Wuzhou (梧州市)
- Hezhou (贺州市)
- Baise (百色市)
- Liuzhou (柳州市)
- Nanning (南宁市)
- Laibin (来宾市)
- Yulin (玉林市)
- Chongzuo (崇左市)
- Guiping (桂平市)

## ★ Sichuan (四川)

- Mengding Mountain (蒙顶山)
- Emei Mountain (峨眉山)
- Yibin (宜宾市)
- Leshan (乐山市)
- Ya'an (雅安市)
- Mingshan (名山县)
- Qionglai (邛崃市)
- Chengdu (成都市)
- Ganzi (甘孜藏族自治州)
- Xichang (西昌市)

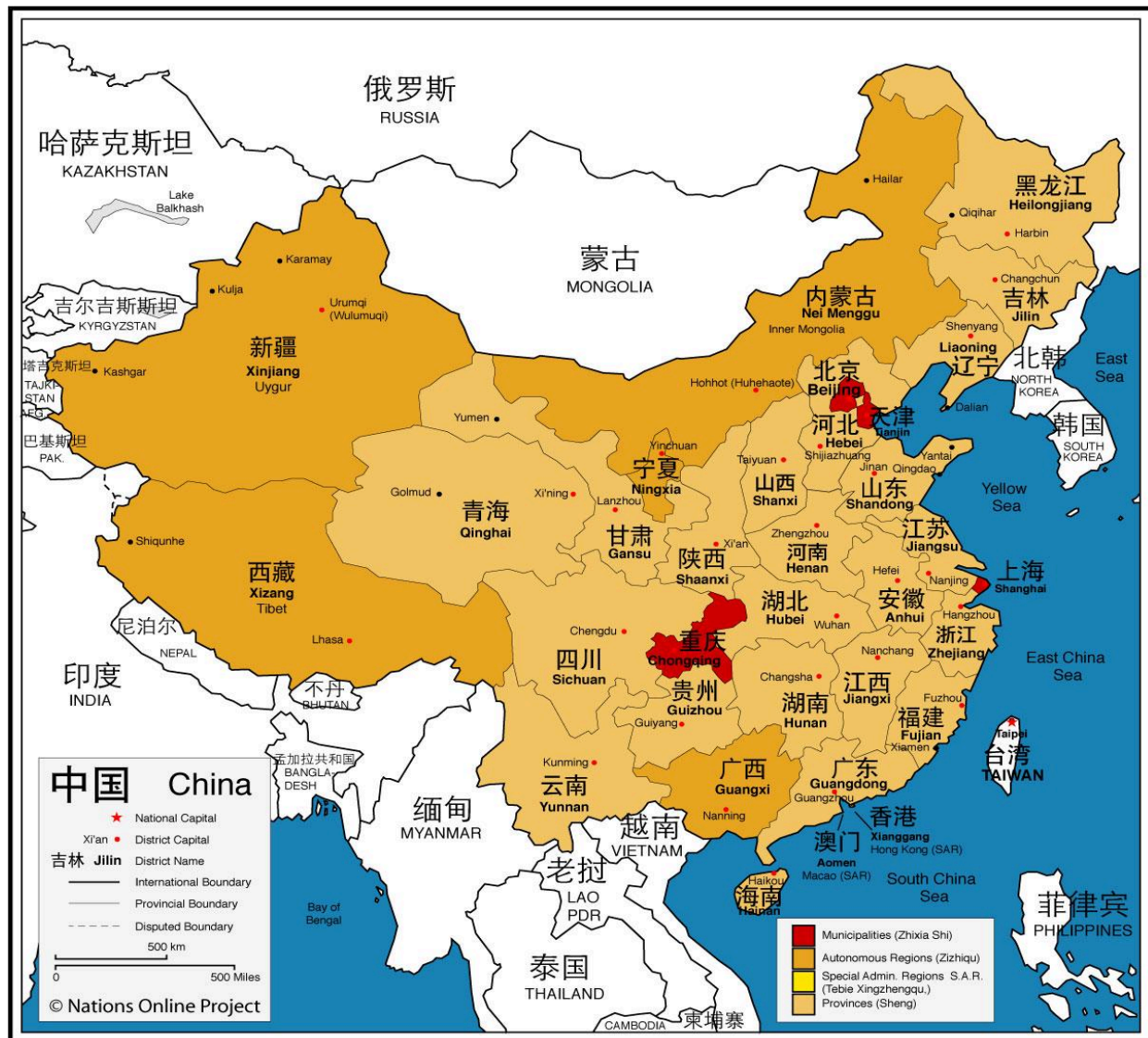
## ★ Hubei (湖北)

- Wuhan (武汉市)
- Yichang (宜昌市)
- Enshi (恩施市)
- Shiyan (十堰市)

- Xianning (咸宁市)
- Huangshi (黄石市)
- Jingzhou (荆州市)
- Xiaogan (孝感市)
- Suizhou (随州市)
- Jingmen (荆门市)

## ★ Henan (河南)

- Xinyang (信阳市)
- Nanyang (南阳市)
- Luoyang (洛阳市)
- Dengfeng (登封市)
- Xinxiang (新乡市)
- Zhoukou (周口市)
- Pingdingshan (平顶山市)
- Anyang (安阳市)
- Kaifeng (开封市)
- Zhengzhou (郑州市)



As you can see many of these provinces are located in the southeastern part of the country as this region has the fittest climate conditions for the *Camellia Sinensis* to grow and harvest.

Hope this would be helpful to all tea lovers that, like me, love all that the birthplace of tea has to offer.

## Endnotes

**\*Duck Shit Aroma:** This tea has nothing to do with duck's poop. In fact, the aroma and flavor is quite delicious for all those that love a good dark oolong. Legend says the monk/farmer that discovered this tasty tea centuries ago didn't want to share it —other versions say that he didn't want the tea to be stolen—, so he said that the tea had a strong *Duck Shit Aroma* for the others not to desire this magnificent tea. The name remains nowadays.



**\*\*Old Immortal Man:** Its mother tree is very old, over 400 years old, and originated in Li Zi Ping Village from Wudong Mountain in Chao Zhou, China. Traditionally, Lao Xian Weng means the legendary Daoist xian immortals, usually refers to a person or similar entity having a long life or being immortal. As the tea tree is very old, and having a unique appearance just like an old man with an immortal soul, people named this tea varietal as “Lao Xian Weng”(Old Immortal Man).

**\*\*\*Eight Immortals:** The tea name is based on a story backed in 1898, there is a tea farmer took some graft of the “Da Wu Ye” tea tree from Qu Zi Liao village, and planted eight tea trees in eight different tea farm separately in Wudong Mountain, the characteristics of the grown trees is similar to each others even they are growing in different environment in the eight different tea garden. As these eight trees are just like “Eight Immortals Crossing the Sea ”, people named the tea as Eight Immortals.

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## Disclaimer

**THIS ARTICLE IS CURRENTLY IN PROCESS, AND MAY HAVE WRONG INFORMATION ABOUT THE TEAS. THIS IS MAINLY FOR YOU, TEA LOVER, TO RECOGNIZE CERTAIN CHINESE TEAS FROM PACKAGES WHEN BUYING. ALSO SYMBOLS MAY VARY FROM TEA TO TEA.**

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## My other articles

[A little guide for identifying Taiwanese teas.](#) (IN PROCESS)

[A little guide for identifying Japanese teas.](#) (IN PROCESS)