



"...That raw, slightly bitter, textured taste of earth, mixed with ginger-sweet milk tea is the taste of India." – Unknown

ON THE MENU: Cardamom Spice + Pistachio Barfti

- The English arrived first established the East India Company in India, in 1600. Chinese variations of tea (*sinensis*) were introduced to India via the British circa 1850 for planting in the Assam region. Darjeeling was another place where these teas were incredibly successful at this time—this region also boasted a mixture of the Chinese and native Indian tea plants.
- Cha-ya (or Chai) is an incredibly popular street-style tea composed of strong black tea, cardamom, fennel, cloves and other spices, sweetened with sugar and mixed with milk for a sweet and creamy beverage that can be enjoyed for leisure and relaxation in either outdoor markets, meeting places, or the home. Sometimes enjoyed with savory treats like samosas, it is also popularly enjoyed alone.
- The name “chai” is the Hindi word for “tea,” originally derived from “cha,” the Chinese word for “tea.” The term chai means a mix of spices steeped into a tea-like beverage. The preparation of Chai is rather unique. The tea leaves are first boiled in water and then boiled again when combined with milk and sugar or honey in the pot, instead of being removed before the other ingredients are integrated.
- Original versions of “masala chai,” or “spiced tea,” contained no actual *Camellia sinensis* tea leaves. The addition of tea, milk, and sugar were popularized thousands of years later (in the mid-1800s) when the British created the now famous tea-growing regions of India and popularized tea as a beverage. Don’t let these modest beginnings trick you, though, Chai is the second-most consumed beverage in India



next to water.

- The origin of chai dates back over 5,000 years, when a king in the region now known as India ordered a “therapeutic” spiced beverage to be created for use in Ayurveda, a traditional medicinal practice in which herbs and spices are used for healing. A variety of indigenous spices would be used to prepare the healing drink depending on the region of the continent or even the neighborhood where the beverage was being made. Whether you are enjoyed Chai at home or on the street, recipes vary from person to person.



- Street chawallas serve chai tea in small clay cups that are used only once and then smashed on the ground afterwards.
- Most of India’s tea production is consumed at home. However, modern “tea bars” are currently on India’s travel radar and boast a contemporary look that updates and gentrifies the tradition of tea in the country.
- *Ayurveda* (a “science of life”) is a 5,000 year-old method of natural medicinal healing that originates from the Vedic culture and integrates roots from Tibetan and traditional Chinese healing practices and is currently enjoying a renaissance now. This philosophy inspires people to stay vitalized while they realize their full potential, commanding a balanced and dynamic relationship between environment (namely, the elements), body, mind, and spirit. Ayurvedic teas are delicately crafted caffeine-free herbal blends (licorice and ginger are two main ingredients) that help to regulate and balance the humours that keep the body in harmony with the world.

Want to learn more?

The World of Caffeine: The Science and Culture of the World's Most Popular Drug by Bennett Alan Weinberg, Bonnie K. Bealer

Tea: History, Terroirs, Varieties by Kevin Gascoyne, Francois Marchand, Jasmin Desharnais



<http://www.myteadrop.com>