Tea Business Development

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Tea is the most commonly consumed beverage all over the world and it is made by steeping in the young tea leaves of the tea plant, *Camellia sinensis* in the hot boiling water. Generally, two common variants of these tea leaves are consumed. Overall, there are many different types of teas; having astringent, cooler and slightly bitter flavors while a variety of teas have sweet, nutty and grassy flavors. This research paper seeks to explore the long history of this legendary beverage and its trade that is infused with a blend of facts and myths. In addition to that, it will also unearth the current status of tea trade in the United States alongside the health benefits of taking tea.

# History and Origin of Tea

As discussed earlier, the history of tea and tea trade is blended with the infusion of myths and facts for the reason that its history can be traced back to Before Common Era. It is known that Emperor Shen Nong, in 2737 B.C.E discovered tea accidentally (Joliffe, 2004). When he was boiling water in the lawn, a leaf from the tea tree fell into his cup and this infused drink tasted good. As a result, he started research on the plant that led to the discovery of many medicinal properties of the plan as well. Nevertheless, Indians attribute the discovery of tea to an Indian Saint, Prince Bodhi-Dharma. He left India to preach Buddhism in China in the year 520. After nine years of meditation without sleep, he cut off his eyelids and a tea plant leaped on the spot. This makes it hard to trace the original roots of tea and thus its origin is associated with Northern India, southwest China, and Tibet.

The Tang dynasty (618-907), is denoted as the classic era of tea owing to its widespread consumption. With the popularity of tea as a beverage, the Government started to impose taxes and it was the time when tea was accepted as the national drink of China. The Classic of Tea treatise or Ch'a Ching was composed of a Buddhist monk, Lu Yu (733-804) during the Tang dynasty. In his work, he deliberated on the benefits of drinking tea along with the preparation and different types of tea. In addition to that, he instilled the writings with a spiritual aesthetic reflective of the Confucian, Taoist and Buddhist thoughts of that era. The teaching sin his work concerned a traditional tea ceremony, a symbolic illustration of simplicity and harmony that flowed throughout the whole universe. The era after that was regarded as the age of tea followed by the Sung dynasty (960-1280 AD.) making artistic references to tea. Chinese culture highly impacted arts and politics during this period in the Far East.

# Discovery of Tea in the West

After China, tea was introduced in Japan by a Japanese Buddhist monk. During his study tour in China, he discovered tea and brought to Japan and began to grow tea in monasteries. In the 17th century, a Chinese monk brought rolled tea in Japan. Tea made by the method of steaming, drying, and rolling tea leaves was invented by Soen Nagatani. Traders and explorers became familiar with the budding tea traditions in Japan and China. Marco Polo in his travel writing mention his discovery of tea but no lasting appearance of tea was found till the 17th century in the West. In 1610, when Dutch merchants took the first steps towards tea trade and the first shipments of tea arrived in Europe. Meanwhile, tea also flowed to Russia via the famous Silk Route from China. In this way, tea became popular in London, Paris, and Amsterdam but its consumption was limited to the royal class only. Owing to the high price, English was not inclined towards tea consumption immediately and coffee was the most preferred drink. Fits tea shop in Europe was opened in 1657. Tea got further legitimacy after the marriage of Charles II and Catherine of Braganza and the concept of tea was introduced in the court. After that, the British East India Trade Company held the tea factory in Macao and established their first position in the East. When the English government levied heavy taxes on the trade of tea, the political tensions increased and led to the Boston Tea Party, a political protest to end the monopoly of the English government (Forman, 2011). Colonists dumped tea into the harbor that resulted in the company to crumble in 1874. Tea was transported by ships and the best tea was bought from China by British and Americans for auction.

# American Tea Trade and Tea Market

Tea became an important part of social life in America during the 19th century and the popularity of tea grew as a beverage. Meanwhile, the American iced tea tradition was introduced in 1904 by a tea merchant at World's Fair in St. Louis, Missouri when he failed to sell hot tea samples. Now 80% of America's tea market sales are driven by iced tea. The concept of tea bags was introduced in 1903 but an American merchant, Thomas Sullivan is credited with giving a commercial image to the tea bag concept. With the growth of beverage popularity in the 19th century, tea significance increased in social life in America. The original tea bag was handmade and hand-stitched until the commercial concept of tea bags was born.

Americans don't leave home without coffee and it is a common breakfast beverage. Now, in Texas, and all across the south, while hot tea is consumed occasionally by a few folks here and there, sweet tea is almost religious in its consumption. Iced coffees and hot teas are available in many places, and both actually growing in popularity, hot coffee and cold sweet iced tea are the kings of their respective kingdoms. The industry in America has shown significant growth and it comprises bagged green tea, Bagged black tea, loose black tea, and other teas. The consumption is also increased due to the health-conscious consumer who prefer tea over sugary drinks.

The convenience of tea bag consumption in the US has also resulted in high growth. One can expect to find coffee at any fast food place and most gas stations will not see hot tea offered. The US is generally not known for producing tea but importing. Only three major areas in the US are dedicated to tea growth. The import market of tea is one of the fastest-growing markets in the US and it is also rising with the rising consumption due to the awareness among consumers. The rising prices of tea imports have also impacted the profitability of industry; apart from the cost of import, the cost of labor, equipment, and marketing and advertisement also incurs (Kennedy, 2017). The rising consumption and culture make this industry profitable.

# Competition in the Tea Industry

Tea being most sought after liquid after the water so there would be demand always.
One of the crucial factors behind the high demand for tea in the market is the availability of variety in terms of flavors for tea lovers. The rising demand for iced tea and other variations of tea has increased the customer base. The notion that tea is beneficial for the health of its consumer and promotes healthy body functioning has also resulted in accelerated demand. The presence of phytochemicals, flavonoids, and antioxidants is another significant factor in boosting its growth and demand in the market. Moreover, the idea that tea supports the prevention of many diseases such as combat arthritis, blood pressure and cardiovascular diseases has also resulted in high consumption of tea.

In 2016, the global tea market stood at US$12.45 billion and it is estimated to rise by the year 2025 to obtain the market value of US$20.03 bn (“Tea Market Size, Share, Trends and Industry Analysis—2023,” n.d.). The variety of flavors also boosts the tea market. The tea market players in the US have high competition from the players in Asia. In terms of growth, the Asia Pacific region has dominated the tea market in the past few years and it is estimated to have the same dominant position in the future as well. This is due to the fact that the Asia Pacific region is one of the top consumers of tea as a hot beverage. Europe and North America are also projected to show a high growth in the tea market owing to the awareness of tea benefits on health. The leading global vendors include DAVIDs Tea, Associated British Foods Plc., Starbucks, Tea Forte, Tata Global Beverages, Unilever Plc., Peet’s Coffee & Tea, and Kusmi Tea.

# Health Benefits of Tea

Drinking tea is beneficial for health. It contains many antioxidants which protect us from various diseases. It is better to have a cup of tea as a beverage rather than having coffee which contains more caffeine. It makes you feel relax and you can work more efficiently. According to some research, it is also known that drinking tea also helps to make your metabolism stronger and improves your immunity. There are so many benefits of drinking tea so you should also try enjoying a cup of tea with your friends. Tea is well known for being one of the best beverage that is also known for being filled with many healthy nutrients that are required by the body to stay healthy and fit. Thus, here are some of the benefits that one may experience from drinking tea on a regular basis.

Tea contains antioxidants work that protects humans from damage from pollution. Green tea is chock full of antioxidants, so it’s great for your immune system. It’s also said to be good for heart health, lowering blood pressure and cholesterol, and alleviate pain from swollen joints. It also boosts metabolism and it is low in caffeine as well (Cooper, Morré, & Morré, 2005). Tea is well known for being one of the best beverage that is also known for being filled with many healthy nutrients that are required by the body to stay healthy and fit. Tea may boost the immune system and it may help battle cancer. Herbal tea may soothe the digestive system Thus, here are some of the benefits that one may experience from drinking tea on a regular basis. Tea helps in reducing the chances of a heart attack. However, too much of it is not recommended. Tea has also been found to boost immunity and keep the immune system strong.

Thus, the history of tea is as old as one could envisage. Tea is one of the most profitable industries in the US due to the awareness of its health benefits, and this industry is expected to grow further and therefore it can be regarded as a profitable industry in the US.

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