

Jasmine Pearls *green tea scented with jasmine flowers*

History: Jasmine has been used to scent green tea since the 5th century in China. The practice became more common in the 17th century. The original area of production was Guanxi, China.

Processing Style: Jasmine Pearls are made first by plucking the newly sprouted spring season leaves of the tea plant along with the stem and two of the lower leaves. The lower, more mature leaves are often discarded, leaving only the bud and long stem. Using traditional bamboo trays, the buds are withered in direct sun or over low heat to reduce moisture and make them supple and conducive to rolling. Once adequate suppleness is achieved, the bud and stem are gently twisted in-between the thumb and index finger and made into a 'pearl' shape. The pearls are then heat infused with jasmine flowers. The infusion process is repeated several times to achieve the desired strength of aroma. High grade Jasmine Pearls undergo this process at least five times.

Peak Season: June



Jasmine flowers used in scenting tea

Terroir Influence: Jasmine Pearl is now produced in several areas in China. Fujian leaf generally produces lot of 'down' or 'silvery hair' that is known to give a smooth buttery texture to the brew. Yunnan leaf is generally bold with more astringency.

Characteristics of Quality Jasmine Pearls:

Appearance: Look for streaks of white within the Jasmine Pearls. This indicates that fresh young leaf tips were used. White leaf tips, more so than mature green leaves, will absorb the flavor of the jasmine and create a smoother, buttery texture to the brew. (See the difference between grade A and C leaves)

Size of the Pearl: Uniformity in size is an indicator of quality. A smaller pearl may suggest that only the small leaf tips were used (see the Grade A leaf) and can indicate quality as well.

Aroma: A high quality tea will have a fresh, well balanced aroma. It will be naturally sweet and floral, rather than synthetically perfumed.

Taste: Jasmine tea has a natural sweetness. The floral properties should be present but not cloying. The texture of the brew should be smooth and buttery.

Scenting Style: Quality jasmine tea undergoes the scenting process several times. Look for teas that have been scented around 5 to 7 times.

