

JAPANESE GREEN TEA

Sencha, Kabusecha and other Green Tea Specialities

Culture, preparation, varieties



KABUSE ICE TEA — a tea which can be brewed with hot or cold water! This special Kabusecha from the first picking gives the lightly roasted leaf stalks and tea powder an oriental note. Even when brewed with cold water, it produces a lovely green color and a mild taste. It can then be served ice-cold “on the rocks” and is an ideal refreshment for at home, during sports and outdoor activities, for picnics and while travelling. This tea is a must if you only have cold water at hand! Each teabag produces up to one liter of tea, hot or cold.

Important: after allowing the teabag to steep for about two minutes in hot water or three minutes in cold water, press it out thoroughly with a spoon and enjoy!

Green Tea Powder and Green Tea Candies

We stock various kinds of Matcha, Kabuse green tea powder, and fine GREEN KISS tea candies with and without tea. You can find out more in the leaflet “Matcha and Kabuse Powder” or on our website.

Green Tea Accessories

In Japan, green tea is always freshly prepared in small ceramic pots. An integrated sieve in front of the nozzle keeps the fine tea leaves from escaping into the cup. Thanks to this the leaves can float freely all through the pot and are not inhibited by a tea net or other mechanism. As several infusions can be made from each portion of tea, the pots and cups are usually quite small. The following recommendation applies:

„The better the tea, the smaller the pot.
 The smaller the pot, the better the tea.“

We offer a wide range of Japanese accessories so that you can enjoy your green tea properly. All of which are made in Japan, and many of them are specially made for KEIKO in traditional Japanese manufactories. Besides teapots, your KEIKO dealer also offers cups made of stoneware or porcelain, cooling vessels, tea thermometers, trays and much more. You will find an overview of our entire product range at our website www.keiko.de.

KABUSE GENMAICHA + MATCHA is a traditional specialty made of the leaves of the second picking, mixed with roasted rice (Genmai) and fresh green tea powder (Matcha). This tea has a full taste with a pleasant roasty note. It is a marvelous intensive green in the cup.

GENMAI – pure roasted rice grains. Use them to create your own Genmaicha with the tea and quantity of your choice. Also serves as a crunchy topping for Matcha-Latte or various desserts.

BENIFUUKI is a variety of tea distinguished by a high methylated catechin (EGCG3) content. The Japanese like to drink it for example to combat allergies such as hay fever. The taste depends very much on the preparation and can be anything from delicately astringent to mild with a flowery fragrance reminiscent of Oolong tea, as the tea leaves are gently cold-fermented overnight. Benifuuki is available from the first and second picking.

Kabusecha in Teabags

KONACHA The small leaf parts in this tea are obtained by sieving the first and second pickings. A fine, fresh, green semi-shaded tea in a practical teabag. Each bag is sealed to prevent the tea from oxidation and can be used for two infusions.

Four KEIKO green teas in pyramid teabags

Four popular KEIKO varieties in exclusive pyramid teabags (sixteen 3 g teabags in a resealable pouch):



**Kabuse Soshun,
 Kabuse No. 1,
 Kabuse Matcha Genmaicha,
 Kabuse Ice Tea**

The advantages of pyramid teabags: the tea leaves have plenty of space to develop their full aroma. Large pores allow

the extracts to pass through quickly and completely. Whether at home, in the office, on journeys or in the restaurant – this is a simple but classy way to make sure your tea will always be a success.

Third picking - July

The small leaves which sprout after the first two harvests are used for this Sencha. We recommend two to three infusions for teas from the third picking (light green packages).

Non-shaded **SENCHA** from the July harvest. It appears light green in the cup. This tea has a pleasant, subtly astringent aroma and is very refreshing.



Bancha

This is made of the larger leaves, which are usually unshaded. Bancha's low caffeine content means it can also be enjoyed in the early evening. We recommend two to three infusions.

BANCHA is harvested after the first main picking. This unusual Bancha receives the same degree of careful preparation normally reserved for Sencha or Kabusecha. It is light green in the cup and has a particularly mild, harmonious aroma. An ideal green tea for the family as well as for beginners.

AKI-BANCHA: an autumn Bancha perfect for everyday life. It is brewed with comparatively hot water and should only be allowed to steep for a short time. When prepared correctly, this autumn Bancha is a good thirst-quencher and very refreshing.

Tea specialties

KABUSE KUKICHA is a Kabusecha from the first picking with fine leaf stalks added. This tea is golden-green in the cup and has a delicate, toasty, mild aroma without bitterness. This delicious tea has a relatively low caffeine content and is therefore suitable for the family even for drinking in the early evening.

KABUSE HOIJICHA

A roasted Kabusecha from the first picking. It has a fresh, roasted aroma and contains only little caffeine. Houjicha can be served both hot and cold; in Japan, it is frequently served as an accompaniment to meals.

DAN (= “warm”), an early first picking in April. The intense heat of the drying process gives this stimulating tea a deep green appearance and a warm, full fragrance. Captivating, velvety taste.

DIAMOND LEAF in 100 g tins. This spring tea is picked during the second half of April, after the first leaf buds have opened. Only the most tender leaves are used. Diamond Leaf has a rich, unforgettable aroma with a fruity, pleasantly flowery fragrance which can be smelt as soon as you open the tin.



Like Tenbu Fuka and Soshun, **TENKO** (= “gift of heaven”), made from the picking at the end of April, has a “lasting aftertaste” which lingers on the tongue. Tenko is jade green in the cup. This tea has a full, fruity, fresh fragrance and a characteristic, nutty taste.

First picking - May

The first leaves shooting on the tea bush are harvested for this shaded Sencha. We recommend three infusions for teas from the first picking (black/green packages).

KABUSE NO. 1 is the premium tea made from the first picking in May. It has a full, vital aroma and is delicately fragrant with a brilliant green in the cup.

ARACHA: May picking. This tea is processed as little as possible; this means it is only steamed for a short time, lightly dried, barely rolled and not sieved. It contains both large and small leaves and stems. Yellowish-green in the cup. When brewed, this specialty releases the same intensive aroma as when it is freshly steamed in Japan. Light and mild on the tongue.

Second picking - June

For this, the leaves at the top of the bush which shoot after the previous harvest are picked. We recommend three infusions for teas from the second picking (dark green packages).

KABUSE NO. 2 is a tangy green Kabusecha from the June picking. It has a mild aroma and appears fresh green with a fine fragrance in the cup.



First early picking - April

Semi-shade teas from the first early picking are sweet, aromatic and have a fruity green scent. Their characteristic “shaded aroma” is technically known as “ooika”. We recommend four to five infusions for teas from the first early picking (black packages).

SHINCHA (= “the new tea”) The first green of spring: fluorescent green. The less intensive drying process gives this Soshun-class tea an absolutely fresh taste and fragrance; it is flown in for you immediately after the April harvest and after processing. Available in the qualities Shincha Classic and Shincha Yume. From the beginning of June, while stocks last!



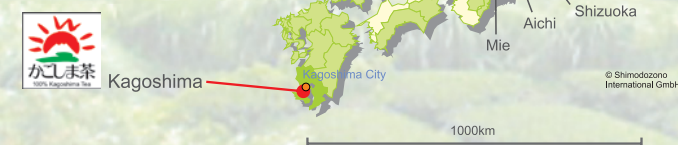
TENBU FUKA (Tenbu = “Dance in heaven”) is plucked in mid-April. Deepest dark green in the cup, the aftertaste is truly “eternal”. A surprise even for connoisseurs of premium green tea and a rarity in Japan. “Fuka” means “deep” and indicates that this green tea in particular is intensively steamed. It has a heavy, sweet fragrance as well as an delightfully distinct aroma.

SOSHUN (= “early spring”) is produced from the picking harvested from the middle to the end of April. It has a wonderfully rich, complex and sweet fragrance and a velvety, harmonious taste. In the cup, it is a brilliant green. This tea is an unforgettable delight, not only connoisseurs.

Japanese semi-shaded tea – kabusecha

Kabusecha is a Sencha grown in semi-shade.

Japan has a long tradition of shading tea bushes to increase their quality. In the Kagoshima region of southern Japan with its still-active volcano “Sakurajima”, the tea bushes are grown in favourably located plantations and covered with special nets (Japanese: kabuse). The bushes are covered by hand and the nets allow about half of the sun’s rays to penetrate. Cultivation in semi-shade most closely approximates the natural light in which the wild tea bush grows. Semi-shaded tea contains larger quantities of active ingredients and has a particularly fresh and fragrant aroma.



The KEIKO process

The most important hallmark of quality when manufacturing KEIKO green tea is the preservation of the vital ingredients in the fresh tea leaves. An enhanced form of steam treatment opens the pores of the leaves, optimally releasing all the ingredients and the fine aroma after just a short brewing time. As these teas,



Cultivation under the kabuse net most closely approximates the natural light in which the wild tea bush thrives, thus ensuring maximum extract content.

which are rich in vital substances, are extremely sensitive to oxygen, they are protected from oxidation in airtight fresh packs. The intensively steamed teas from the early pickings, once processed, are

characterized by a fine pine needle-like, broken leaf structure and an incomparably high extract content.

Harvest time critical to determine tea quality

Along with the soil and the location of the plantation, the tea quality is influenced mostly by the climate; particularly in early spring after the winter break. Then the mild spring sun and the climate typical of southern Kagoshima have a favourable effect on the development of aromatic substances as well as the active ingredients in the tea leaf. Due to this, tea from the first pickings therefore has a high yield and is particularly aromatic.

Organic cultivation

KEIKO’s own tea gardens were switched to organic cultivation back in 1992, and were the first in Japan to be awarded the EC seal of organic quality. All KEIKO teas are cultivated in controlled organic plantations in compliance with EC regulation 834/2007, control board DE-ÖKO-013. Back in 1999, STIFTUNG WARENTEST awarded KEIKO the grade “Free of pesticide residues”, the only loose Japanese tea tested to receive this accolade.

21 green teas from Japan were tested. Test result: no pesticide residue in KEIKO tea Kabuse no. 2 (analyzed pesticide pollution: 17 x severe, 1 x marked, 2 x low, 1 x none).



Preparing Japanese green tea

Along with the quality of the tea itself, the taste is determined by the following four factors: water quality, water temperature, brewing time and the quantity. We would like to give a few recommendations for these. However, please experiment for yourself to find out how the taste varies with different forms of preparation.

Good water is important

The quality of the water has a major influence on the taste of the tea, particularly on the finer varieties. Use non-chlorinated drinking water with a low lime content, filtered water or good table water.

1.

Prepare a cup for each person. Boil water and allow it to cool to 60 ° to 80 °C depending on the tea variety. To do this, you can either pour the water into a cooling vessel or put it directly into the cups; the latter method has the advantage of pre-warming them and measuring the exact amount of water needed.



2.

Put one level teaspoon of tea per person into a ceramic teapot. Pour one cup of water per person over the tea. Allow the first infusion to steep for no longer than one minute.



Preparation step-by-step

The right water temperature for each tea.

The right water temperature for each tea. The water should be brought to the boil to reduce the oxygen, lime and chlorine content and then allowed to cool. If the water is too hot, the tea will not be able to release its full aroma and will easily become bitter. The higher the quality of the tea, the lower the temperature should be.

We recommend a temperature of about 60° - 65°C for tea from the first picking. A water temperature of about 65° - 70°C is suitable for tea from the second and third pickings and for Bancha. If you like to drink several cups of tea during the day, it is advisable to boil the water and keep it in a thermos flask for your tea breaks.

3.

If the tea is to be served to several people, start by pouring just a little tea into each cup then fill them up further in reverse order. This will make sure that the tea in each cup is equally strong. The pouring movements gradually give the tea the correct green color. Pour out the very last “golden” drops, to make sure the tea does not steep any further.

4.

Now place the full teacups on the saucers and serve fresh. The Japanese like to serve small sweets with unsweetened tea. KEIKO offers a special selection of GREEN KISS and PAN sweets.

5.

In order to keep the tea fresh, the next brews should ideally be prepared in quick succession. For this, pour more water from the cooling vessel over the tea leaves. Only allow to brew for about 15 seconds, as the leaves have already absorbed water and will give off their content more quickly. Serve immediately.

After three to five infusions, when no more extracts are available, loosen the leaves by tapping the teapot on the back (opposite the sieve) and empty them out. Rinse the teapot thoroughly under running water. Let the water flow through the nozzle into the pot to ensure that the sieve is also clean. If there is any residue, clean the teapot with sodium bicarbonate and a small brush – avoid removing the sieve if possible. Always leave the teapot to dry with the opening at the bottom.

Quantity

Put one level teaspoon of tea per person in a ceramic teapot. Pour hot water over the leaves. Choose a teapot large enough to fill each of the cups about two-thirds full. In Japan, tea from the first picking in particular is drunk out of small cups but brewed relatively strongly. This gives it an intensive green color and a marvelously fresh aroma. In contrast, Bancha is drunk out of large mugs. It is light green in color

and is a good thirst-quencher. The better the quality of the tea, the more brews can be made out of one portion. This is why even the finest teas are excellent value when their yield is considered. Compare this with other drinks and you will be pleasantly surprised!

Brewing time

The better the tea quality, the longer it can be left to brew the first time round. Tea from the first picking should brew for about 60 seconds, Bancha only for 30 to 40 seconds. Further brews from the same portion should only be allowed to steep for about 15 seconds, the final brew can be allowed to steep for somewhat longer. Once the tea is ready, the teapot should be emptied down to the last drop after each brew. It is important that the tea is always freshly prepared. Once it is ready, it should not be kept warm over a warmer or in a thermos flask, as it will quickly turn yellow and lose its fresh aroma.

Type	picking	Infusion					
		1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	
		°C					
		Sekunden					
Tenbu Fuka / Tenbu		60° - 65°	60	15	15	15	30
Soshun / Shincha / Diamond Leaf / Dan / Tenko	1st	60° - 65°	60	15	15	30	-
Kabusecha no. 1		60° - 65°	60	15	30	-	-
Kabusecha no. 2	2nd	65° - 70°	40	15	30	-	-
Sencha	3rd	65° - 70°	40	15	30	-	-
Bancha	1. - 3.	65° - 70°	40	15	30	-	-
Kabusecha Matcha-Genmai	2nd	65° - 70°	40	15	30	-	-
Kabusecha Kukicha	1st	65° - 70°	40	15	30	-	-
Kabusecha Konacha	1.+2.	70° - 75°	60-90	15	30	-	-
Kabusecha Houjicha	1st	75° - 80°	30	15	30	-	-
Benifuuki	1st	80° - 85°	90	30	30	-	-

Storing fine green tea

In order to prevent KEIKO green tea losing its freshness and active ingredients shortly after opening, you should press out the air at the top of the package, close it with a clip and store it in the fridge or freezer compartment. Once opened, each package should ideally be used up within four weeks.