

## English Tea Origin and features

Tea is a symbol of British culture. **Afternoon tea** is a very British tradition. On special occasions, people go out to a hotel or café and have afternoon tea, usually at about 4 p.m. In London, there's even a competition called the **Afternoon Tea Awards** for the hotel with the best afternoon tea.

But tea does not originate from Britain. It originates from **Asia**. In fact, **China** was the motherland of tea. Chinese used tea as a medicinal remedy as early as 2700 BCE.

Tea arrived in England around **1650** as a medicinal remedy and it was extremely expensive due to the long import journey. Within ten years tea became the fashion drink at the English court. Only in the following century tea became national consumption while remaining quite expensive.

At the **beginning of the 1800s** the British stopped importing tea leaves from China after the discovery of its spontaneous growth in some areas of **India** which was already an English colony.

In the **early 20<sup>th</sup> century** **Thomas Sullivan** from New York unintentionally created the **tea bags**.

One tea bag contains around 2-3 grams of tea which travelled a fair distance.

The journey of tea begin with the **Camellia sinensis** seeds. Farmers re- plant the young bushes in large estates in regions with **hot and humid climates**, on average of **18 to 20 degrees Celsius**, with **regular rainfall** throughout the year.

Only after **four years** they can pluck the tea plants.

The global tea demand is rising so much that the demand exceeds the supply and tea producers are under more pressure.

(Text adapted from "The amazing supply chain of a cup of tea", written by Chloe Cooke and from "Twenty – one 2", DEA Scuola, p. 206.)