

# JAS-eTea Guide to Buying White Tea

## Step 1:

### Identify what is a white tea

What qualifies as white tea, generally speaking? The dry leaves and the infused liquid aren't always white. So, look for these:

- Leaves come from tea plant cultivars like:
  - *Shui Xian* (Narcissus, a cultivar known for the excellent oolongs made from it) from Fujian Province in China
  - *Da Bai* (Big White, considered finest) from Fuding County in that province
- Harvested once per year in Spring when the weather is cool and dry.
- Hand-plucked per this standard:
  - buds are immature and unopened
  - buds retain fine white hairs
  - pluck in early morning after dew dried
- Plucked per one of these styles (most common):
  - one bud
  - one bud and a leaf
  - one bud with 2-3 leaves on the stem
- Processed per strict guidelines:
  - either sun-withering or no withering
  - no oxidation or rolling
  - air-drying and some resultant withering (and some say a little oxidation)
- Silvery hairs are usually intact and so are the leaves, since they are not rolled or handled roughly in any way.

Flavors are not harsh or bitter but rather mild, sweet, nutty, or similar characters depending on which grade and quality of white tea you are having.

## Step 2:

### Identify which are fine white teas

It's important to identify the premium fine white teas. More tea vendors cash in on the growing interest in this type of tea, so quality doesn't seem to keep pace.

Place of origin is not necessarily the key. Some white teas such as Silver Needle have become so popular that tea gardens from several countries besides China are presenting theirs on the market. In addition, there are about four white tea grades, and different levels of quality within each.

#### White tea grades:

Grade	Tea Name, Description
1st	Silver Needle ( <i>Baihao Yinzhen</i> ), buds only
2nd	White Peony ( <i>Baimudan, Paimutan</i> ), one bud and a leaf
3rd	Tribute Eyebrow ( <i>Gong mei</i> ), one bud with 2-3 leaves on stem
4th	Longevity Eyebrow ( <i>Shou mei</i> ), one bud with 2-3 leaves on stem

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#### What to look for in highest quality white tea grades:

- Produced per established standards.
- Not blended with other styles of tea.
- Good whole buds with high ratio of buds to leaves, depending on white tea grade.
- Mostly whole leaves (for grades 2, 3, & 4).

## Step 3:

### How to handle fine white teas

Your fine white teas, properly stored and infused, will delight you.

#### Preserving your fine white teas

For best results, store these teas in a cool, dry place in an airtight container. You could even store them in your refrigerator; it actually improves the taste of the teas as long as you don't take them out and put them back in the refrigerator frequently, which could degrade the tea.

#### Proper infusion of fine white teas:

- Generally white teas are light weight so be sure to add enough dry leaves to the cup, teapot, or gaiwan.
- White teas are generally infused in cooler temperatures (ranging from 170-185° F), varying with each tea.
- Infusing times are usually longer, allowing buds to open fully:
  - 4-5 minutes 1st infusion
  - 5-7 minutes 2nd infusion
  - 6-8 minutes 3rd infusion

For top-quality teas like Yinzhen Silver Needles, use more leaves and infuse multiple times for short durations.

Enjoy the light flavor by itself, not with food. White tea a great alternative to green tea for those who want health benefits without the grassy flavor or stomach upset that some experience.

*This is meant as basic information only. For more details, see the Tea Information section of our store site: JAS-eTea.com.*

White teas, once a rarity, are now available more than ever. High prices paid for a handful of select white teas has prompted other countries, including India, Taiwan, Nepal, Northern Thailand, and Sri Lanka, to jump into the market.



How do you determine what makes a truly fine white tea, especially with the quality of some white teas now being sold? This guide will help equip you with knowledge to make your choice of which to buy.



## About Us

**JAS-eTea.com** is your friendly online tea store. We share our love of teas with you and appreciate your business, wishing you all good health. We offer:

- over 300 premium teas from China, Taiwan, India, Thailand, and more
- quality teawares and books
- loose leaf & sachet flavored teas
- herbal teas and decaffeinated teas
- chais (spiced tea in the style from India)

## Our Mission

To promote the knowledge and awareness of fine teas and meet your expectations of what an exceptional tea vendor should be.

## Our Goals

1. Provide the **best service available**. Service is paramount in any business endeavor. If you ever have a concern, please let us know so we can improve.
2. Be your **tea source of first resort**. When you think of tea, we want you to think of JAS-eTea.com!
3. Keep **improving our selection** of products. If we don't have the tea you are looking for, let us know. We will do our best to acquire that tea for you.

Brought to you by:



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*Purveyors of Fine Teas*

A vertical banner with a green background. At the top is the JAS-eTEA logo. Below it is a close-up photograph of fresh green tea leaves. At the bottom, the text reads "Your Buying Guide for Fine White Teas" in a mix of bold sans-serif and elegant script fonts.