



October 2024

The Art of Tea: A Journey into Japanese Traditions

Chanoyu - the art of tea. It's not often that a simple drink is called an art form, but once you have had a chance to experience a Japanese tea ceremony you would not be surprised. A culmination of centuries of tradition and culture, *chanoyu* is an intricate ritual which evokes a deep sense of harmony and respect.

First brought to Japan by monks, it's natural that many elements of the tea ceremony are rooted deeply in Buddhism. In particular, it has strong ties to Zen Buddhism where tea became an essential part of religious rituals which eventually evolved and developed into the tea ceremony we know today. One phrase which is intrinsic to *chanoyu* is *ichi go ichi e* or "one time, one meeting." Each tea service is to be treated as a once in a lifetime event, which can never be repeated and will never occur again. As such each tea ceremony participant should partake with true sincerity and reverence.



You may be wondering what exactly goes into a tea ceremony? Surely there is only one way to make tea - hot water meets tea leaves, job's a good 'un! However, the reality is that the Japanese *chanoyu* is one of the world's most intricate ways of enjoying a cup of tea. Before you even get to the actual tea ceremony, guests must jump through various etiquette hoops made up of bows and cleansing rituals. The host meticulously prepares the tea by whisking *matcha* powder with hot water, creating a smooth, foamy beverage. The tea is then offered among the guests, accompanied by a series of respectful bows and adherence to precise ceremonial protocols.



The care that goes into the *chanoyu* does not start at the ceremony itself, but back when the tea is first being cultivated. Behind every cup of Japanese tea is a long tradition of tea farming, particularly in regions like Shizuoka, Uji, and Kagoshima, where climate and geography are ideal for tea cultivation. Farmers use precise techniques to grow and shade tea plants, particularly for gyokuro and matcha, which require special care to enhance flavour and aroma. The harvesting process is done meticulously, often by hand, to preserve the highest quality leaves.

If you're curious about the journey from tea farm to teacup, visit our [blog post on Japanese tea farming](#) to explore the traditional methods used in cultivating Japan's finest teas.



Blog Post

Head to our blog to read all about
tea farming in Japan

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Expert Profile: SARAH

See what Sarah has to say about her recent visit to a Japanese tea farm...



WHAT CAN VISITORS EXPECT TO SEE DURING A TEA FARM VISIT?

During my recent tea farm visit, I had the privilege of exploring scenic tea fields, witnessing tea processing up close with detailed explanations, savouring fresh tea tastings, and gaining valuable insights into traditional tea cultivation methods.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE JAPANESE TEA?

It has to be hojicha, a mild, roasted green tea with a rich, smoky flavour and low caffeine. It goes perfectly with a light sweet or cake and the perfect drink before bed time!

HOW DOES VISITING A TEA FARM PROMOTE RESPONSIBLE TOURISM IN JAPAN?

Visiting a tea farm promotes responsible tourism by directly supporting local farmers, helping preserve traditional tea-making practices, and encouraging environmentally sustainable farming methods. It fosters a deeper connection between travellers and local communities while contributing to the protection of Japan's cultural and natural heritage.



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