



Tea Culture in Taiwan

Reading Worksheet — Level F | tahricteaches.com

Taiwan's tea culture is widely regarded as one of the most **sophisticated** in East Asia, blending centuries-old Chinese traditions with distinctly local innovations. Tea was first brought to the island in the early 18th century by settlers from Fujian Province, who recognized that Taiwan's mountainous terrain and humid subtropical climate were ideally suited to cultivation. Today, the island produces some of the world's most celebrated oolong teas.

The geography of Taiwan plays a **crucial** role in the distinctive character of its teas. High-elevation regions such as Alishan, Lishan, and Shan Lin Xi produce leaves that develop slowly in cool mountain air, resulting in a smoother, more aromatic flavor profile. These conditions, combined with generations of accumulated expertise, allow Taiwanese farmers to **cultivate** varieties that command premium prices on the international market.

Beyond agriculture, tea occupies a central place in Taiwanese social life. The traditional gongfu tea ceremony, which **emphasizes** patience, precision, and mindfulness, is still practiced in dedicated teahouses scattered throughout cities like Taipei and Taichung. Participants brew small portions repeatedly, savoring how the flavor evolves across multiple infusions, and engaging in unhurried conversation.

In recent decades, Taiwan has also become globally famous for bubble tea, which was **invented** in Taichung during the 1980s. This sweet, milky drink with chewy tapioca pearls has transformed how younger generations engage with tea, creating an industry that now spans dozens of countries. While purists sometimes lament its departure from tradition, bubble tea has undeniably introduced Taiwanese tea culture to millions of new consumers.

The contrast between solemn teahouses and bustling bubble tea shops reflects Taiwan's broader cultural identity: deeply rooted in heritage yet remarkably adaptive. Whether sipping a delicate high-mountain oolong or queueing for a plastic cup of brown sugar boba, drinkers participate in a living tradition that continues to evolve while honoring its origins.

A. Vocabulary

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|------------------------|--|
| 1. sophisticated _____ | a. created or designed something that did not exist before |
| 2. crucial _____ | b. of superior quality and commanding higher prices |
| 3. cultivate _____ | c. drink made by soaking leaves or herbs in hot water |
| 4. emphasizes _____ | d. able to adjust and change to fit new conditions |
| 5. invented _____ | e. highly developed, refined, or complex in nature |
| 6. heritage _____ | f. extremely important or essential to a particular outcome |
| 7. infusion _____ | g. prepare and use land to grow crops or plants |
| 8. lament _____ | h. gives special importance or attention to something |
| 9. premium _____ | i. traditions, achievements, and beliefs passed down from previous generations |
| 10. adaptive _____ | j. express sorrow, regret, or disappointment about something |

B. True or False

- | | |
|--|---|
| ___ 1. Tea was brought to Taiwan in the early 18th century by settlers from Fujian Province. | ___ 2. Taiwan's tropical lowlands are the primary regions for producing high-quality tea. |
|--|---|

- ___ 3. High-elevation tea growing produces leaves with a smoother, more aromatic flavor profile.
- ___ 4. The gongfu tea ceremony emphasizes speed and efficiency over mindfulness.
- ___ 5. Bubble tea was invented in Taichung during the 1980s.
- ___ 6. Bubble tea has had little impact outside of Taiwan.
- ___ 7. Alishan and Lishan are well-known high-elevation tea regions in Taiwan.
- ___ 8. Traditional teahouses can still be found in cities like Taipei and Taichung.
- ___ 9. All Taiwanese tea purists fully embrace bubble tea as an authentic tradition.
- ___ 10. Taiwan's tea culture blends Chinese traditions with local innovations.

C. Fill in the Blanks

Word Bank: sophisticated, crucial, cultivate, emphasizes, invented, heritage, premium, adaptive

1. Taiwan's mountainous geography plays a _____ role in shaping the unique flavor of its teas.
2. The gongfu tea ceremony _____ patience, precision, and mindfulness during preparation.
3. Farmers in high-elevation regions _____ tea varieties that command high prices internationally.
4. Bubble tea was _____ in Taichung during the 1980s and quickly spread worldwide.
5. Taiwan's tea culture is regarded as one of the most _____ in East Asia.



D. Comprehension Questions

1. Why is Taiwan's geography important for producing high-quality tea?
2. How does the gongfu tea ceremony differ from drinking bubble tea?
3. What does the contrast between teahouses and bubble tea shops reveal about Taiwanese culture?

E. Discussion Questions

1. Do you think modern innovations like bubble tea strengthen or weaken traditional tea culture? Why?
2. What role does a national drink or food play in shaping a country's cultural identity in your home country?



Answer Key

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A. Vocabulary: 1-e, 2-f, 3-g, 4-h, 5-a, 6-i, 7-c, 8-j, 9-b, 10-d

B. True/False: 1-T, 2-F, 3-T, 4-F, 5-T, 6-F, 7-T, 8-T, 9-F, 10-T

C. Fill Blanks: 1-crucial, 2-emphasizes, 3-cultivate, 4-invented, 5-sophisticated

D. Comprehension:

1. The mountainous terrain and humid subtropical climate, especially in high-elevation regions, allow tea leaves to develop slowly, resulting in smoother and more aromatic flavors.
2. The gongfu ceremony emphasizes patience, precision, and mindful conversation, while bubble tea is a fast, sweet, modern drink consumed casually and on the go.
3. It shows that Taiwanese culture is deeply rooted in heritage while remaining highly adaptive and open to innovation.