

Kangra Tea- The Tea from Hills of Himachal Pradesh

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Introduction

India is one of the finest tea producing countries and ranked second in the world. Tea constitutes one of the top ten exported agricultural commodities, with a contribution of around USD 0.8 billion. Assam Tea and Darjeeling Tea are the most recognized one. Major tea growing states are Assam, West Bengal, Tripura, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka. Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand are also traditional tea growing states, albeit to a less significant extent. The Kangra valley in the Dhauladhar range of the Western Himalayas, became part of British India in 1849, after the conclusion of the second Anglo-Sikh war. First commercial tea plantation in Himachal Pradesh was established in 1852 at Holta, Palampur. With time the Kangra tea grew so popular that it won gold medal in London in 1886 for its superb flavor and quality.

Kangra Tea

Kangra district is situated in the North-West Indian state of Himachal Pradesh. Tea was first planted in Kangra, by the British and Tea has been cultivated and manufactured since the middle of the 19th century. Despite having suffered a good deal during transit the plants performed excellent in growth. This encouraged the government to go ahead for the establishment of tea industry in the valley. Kangra tea industry occupied prime position with respect to its quality from the last quarter of the 19th century to the third quarter of 20th century. Tea made in Kangra during this period was comparable with that of every part of the world. Kangra renowned as “The valley of Gods” is famous for its distinct flavoured tea.

Kangra tea is registered under the GI of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 and got GI certification in 2005. In recent years the production has dwindled from 17-18 lakh kilograms to just 8-9 lakh kilograms. The tea industry in the state has been eclipsed by Darjeeling, Assam, and Nilgiri. The government has also played a least attention towards tea plantations, due to its relatively smaller share towards the state economy. Most of the

policies are targeted towards the apple industry which is worth INR 4,000 crore, while tea industry accounts to just INR 18-20 crore. Rao and others carried out the study in 2019 and identified the major constraints faced by different stakeholders of Kangra Tea value chain were: cooperative failures, unmarked GI label, high labour cost and availability problem, seasonal demand and market availability problems.



Tea Industry in Himachal Pradesh

In 1849, Dr. Jameson brought China tea plants to Kangra valley, from Almora and Dehradun. Both black and green teas were manufactured in Kangra. But, the disaster of 1905, instabilities in the major importing regions like Kashmir & Afghanistan and liquidation of tea auction centre at Punjab in 2005, brought down the tea trade to a great extent. Quite unlike the organized tea planting that exists in Darjeeling, Assam and the Nilgiris, the Kangra tea, today literally survives against all odds. Dominated by small growers, tea growing in the state is more of a cottage industry. At present, the tea acreage is estimated at 2,312 hectares with practically half the area considered either neglected or abandoned. Today Kangra tea is dominated by few major tea gardens viz. Palampur Co-operative Tea Factory, Manjhee Valley Tea Estate, The Wah Tea Estate, Dharamshala Tea Company.

Cooperative and Corporate Tea Factories

During 1964-83, the state government of H.P. provided assistance for setting up of four cooperative tea factories. Since small growers lack the financial capacity to set up their own factories, they were encouraged to supply the green leaf to the coop factories,



which would then process and market the made tea. But, sadly by year 2002, only the Palampur Tea Factory was functional while, the others shut down as operations became economically unviable. Tea Board of India stepped in to encourage large growers to invest in the region. A result of such intervention is Manjhee Valley, promoted by A.K. Singh, a veteran tea entrepreneur, and his son Kunal Singh who handles marketing based in New Delhi. In 2003, HP government leased the Sidhbari cooperative tea factory to the Singhs. Year 2006 - Baijnath cooperative tea factory was given on lease to Tewari and partners, who are now marketing Kangra teas under the brand name 'Himtea'. Himalayan Enterprises Tea Factory produces the tea under the brand name "The Himalayan Brew", is 150 years old. Dharamshala Tea Company was established in the year 1882. From 2005, onwards they have shifted to production of black orthodox and other speciality tea like white tea, green tea and oolong tea. Teas are packed in the tins and cartons in the name of Mann Brand.

Specialty of Kangra Tea

The difference of Kangra tea with the other kinds of tea is that the distinct raw mango aroma in it. It also offers you the more delicious mild taste than the other teas. The distinctive aroma, colour and flavour are indeed the unique selling proposition (USP) of Kangra tea (both black and green) owing to unique climatic conditions prevailing in snow-clad Dhauladhar ranges of Himalayas which differentiates it from tea growing in other parts of the country. The major aroma compound (2,5-dimethylpyrazine and ethylpyrazine) which is found in Kangra orthodox tea was absent in other teas (Institute of Himalayan Bio-resource Technology [IHBT]). Unlike other teas, Kangra tea is prepared by an orthodox method of processing due to the size of short leaf as it is difficult to cut such small leaves by machines using Crush, Tear, Curl (CTC) method. Orthodox tea is of higher quality than CTC tea, and most of the small tea growers (STGs) in Kangra Valley manufacture by the orthodox method. In India, CTC tea accounts for around 90.50 per cent of the production, whereas orthodox tea accounts for the remaining 9.50% (National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development, 2016). Kangra tea is helpful in curing heart disease, reduces body weight, an antioxidant and low in caffeine and contains various minerals and vitamins.

Table 1: Proximate data on important bioactive compounds present in Indian Teas

Bioactive Compounds	Kangra Tea	Darjeeling Tea	Assam Tea	Nilgiri Tea
Catechin	3.6 mg/g	0.7 mg/g	~3.5- 9.5 mg/g	- -
Epicatechin	27.7 mg/g	2.3 mg/g	~10- 21.2 mg/g	3.9 mg/g
Epigallocatechin	43.6 mg/ g	3.0 mg/ g	~41.2- 63.1 mg/ g	1.6 mg/ g
Epigallocatechin-3- gallate	102.7 mg/g	24.9 mg/g	~ 108- 147 mg/g	6.2 mg/g
Epicatechin- 3- gallate	39.4 mg/g	5.9 mg/g	~34.2- 64.6mg/g	0.7 mg/g
Theanine	~1.3- 1.5 %	~1.3%	~2.9%	-
Caffeine	~17.5 mg/g	22.1 mg/g	~30-55 mg/g	24.8 mg/g

The Nutritional Information of Kangra Tea

The health benefits of Kangra tea is proven by the nutritional fact contained in it. It includes many vitamins and minerals good for our health. A glass of brewed Kangra tea is able to provide us with the following values:

- Dietary flavonoids
- Calcium
- Zinc
- Folic acids
- Vitamin B1
- Vitamin B2
- Vitamin B6

The Health Benefits of Kangra Tea

Kangra tea is grown in one of the famous tea regions in India. However, it is sometimes also called as Himalayan tea. Whatever the name is, Kangra tea is able to give the amazing health benefits for you. Here are some of the benefits of Kangra tea.



- ✚ **Low caffeine content:** Kangra tea possesses the low level of caffeine. Therefore, it is recommended for you to change your coffee habit with the healthy tea habit, as it gives you more health benefits with the similar effect to your body. Drink it in the morning to enhance your day.
- ✚ **Manage weight:** Consuming Kangra tea is good to manage your weight. Just like the Health Benefits of Tulsi Tea for Weight Loss Plan, Kangra tea is able to inhibit fat absorption, and effectively prevent weight gain. In addition, it is a very low-calorie drink which is very good for your weight loss program. Not only prevent the weight gain, it can also reduce your weight. To have the health benefits of Kangra tea for your weight loss program, it is recommended for you to drink the tea right after the meal time.
- ✚ **Reduce stress:** Some of you might have known the health benefits of Health Benefits of Drinking Green Tea before Bed. The same thing also happens in Kangra tea. Drinking Kangra tea prior the bed time is able to reduce your stress and improve the sleep quality.
- ✚ **Improve mood:** Some drinks are good for your mood. Just like the Health Benefits of Chocolate Drink, Kangra tea or Himalayan tea can do the same. Drinking Kangra tea is pleasant and able to improve your mood. You can even fix your mood just by sniffing on the pleasant aroma of Kangra tea.
- ✚ **Lower blood pressure:** Drinking Kangra tea is known to be able in loosening your blood vessel. This way, we can prevent high blood pressure. As we know, the high blood pressure may lead to some other problems such as heart diseases.
- ✚ **Reduce cholesterol:** Kangra tea is also effective to reduce your bad cholesterol level. It is able to filter the bad cholesterol from your foods and perfectly expel the bad cholesterol along with the waste. This way, the consumption of Kangra tea is able to reduce the risk of developing coronary heart.
- ✚ **Prevent cancer:** Just like the other kind of tea, such Health Benefits of Golden Monkey Tea, Kangra tea is rich with antioxidants. Antioxidants are able to fight the free radicals, the most potent risk factor of cancer. Some studies concluded that Kangra tea is good to reduce the risk of some types of cancer including lung, throat, breast, colon, and prostate cancer.



- ✚ **Slower aging:** The antioxidants in Kangra tea are able to slower aging process. It prevents the appearance of aging sign on your skin, such as dark spot and wrinkle. It can also combat the growth of grey hair and prevent macular degeneration diseases.
- ✚ **Good for skin:** Kangra tea is not only good to prevent the sign of aging, but also to improve your skin complexity. It is able to brighten your skin, just as it is included in the health Benefits of Drinking Green Tea for Skin Whitening. No wonder we can easily find the skin care product which include tea extract in it.

Conclusion

Kangra teas have been known for their distinct flavour, aromas and presence of bioactive compounds all around the world. This sector stays to be the key strength for economic growth in state. Since people are now more focused on switching their regular lifestyle towards healthier side, hence the nutraceuticals play a very dominant role in this regard. Moreover, research must also focus on exploring the Kangra tea for their other health benefits too, hence helping everyone to understand this everyday beverage from nutraceutical point of view. In the coming decades, this industry will drive handsome revenue for state.