
International Standard



3720

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Black tea — Definition and basic requirements

Thé noir — Définition et caractéristiques de base

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work.

Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for approval before their acceptance as International Standards by the ISO Council. They are approved in accordance with ISO procedures requiring at least 75 % approval by the member bodies voting.

International Standard ISO 3720 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 34, *Agricultural food products*.

This third edition cancels and replaces the second edition (ISO 3720-1981), subclause 4.1 of which has been technically revised, and the annex to which has been replaced by a reference to ISO 5498.

Users should note that all International Standards undergo revision from time to time and that any reference made herein to any other International Standard implies its latest edition, unless otherwise stated.

Black tea — Definition and basic requirements

0 Introduction

Tea is grown and manufactured in numerous countries of the world and is blended and/or drunk in many more. Black tea may be produced from tea from one garden or region or may be a blend of teas from two or more origins.

The desired characteristics of a black tea and the resulting liquor depend on many factors including the type of water to be used for brewing, whether the liquor is to be drunk with or without milk or lemon, and on individual tastes.

The objects of this International Standard are to specify the plant source from which black tea is to be manufactured and to set requirements for certain chemical characteristics which, if met, are an indication that the tea has been subjected to recognized good production practice.

It is a matter for the parties concerned whether to apply the requirements of this International Standard to a consignment or lot of black tea. The quality of teas is usually assessed by tea tasters, who base their judgements on their previous experience of tea from the producing area and their knowledge of national or regional conditions and preferences in the consuming country. Account may be taken of characteristics such as the appearance of the tea before preparation of a liquor, the appearance of the infused leaf and the appearance, odour and taste of the liquor. An expert tea taster can assess whether a tea would be unlikely to comply with the chemical requirements. Thus, in practice, time and expense can be saved by submitting teas for chemical analysis only if the tea is considered "suspect" by a tea taster.

1 Scope and field of application

This International Standard specifies the parts of a named plant that are suitable for making black tea for consumption as a beverage and the chemical requirements for black tea that are used to indicate that tea from that source has been produced in accordance with good production practice.

It also specifies the packing and marking requirements for black tea in containers.

It is not applicable to decaffeinated black tea.

2 References

ISO 1572, *Tea — Preparation of ground sample of known dry matter content.*

ISO 1573, *Tea — Determination of loss in mass at 103 °C.*

ISO 1574, *Tea — Determination of water extract.*

ISO 1575, *Tea — Determination of total ash.*

ISO 1576, *Tea — Determination of water-soluble ash and water-insoluble ash.*

ISO 1577, *Tea — Determination of acid-insoluble ash.*

ISO 1578, *Tea — Determination of alkalinity of water-soluble ash.*

ISO 1839, *Tea — Sampling.*

ISO 3103, *Tea — Preparation of liquor for use in sensory tests.*

ISO 5498, *Agricultural food products — Determination of crude fibre content — General method.*

ISO 6078, *Black tea — Vocabulary.*

3 Definition

black tea : Tea derived solely and exclusively, and produced by acceptable processes, notably fermentation and drying, from the leaves, buds and tender stems of varieties of the species *Camellia sinensis* (Linnaeus) O. Kuntze, known to be suitable for making tea for consumption as a beverage.

[Definition reproduced from ISO 6078.]

4 Basic requirements

4.1 General requirements

The tea shall have no taint and shall be reasonably free from extraneous matter. Liquor for assessment of taint shall be prepared by the method described in ISO 3103. The assessment shall be described in the test report using terms defined in ISO 6078.

4.2 Chemical requirements

4.2.1 The tea shall comply with the requirements specified in the table, in which all the figures given are expressed on the basis of the material oven-dried at 103 ± 2 °C by the method described in ISO 1572.

4.2.2 No limit is specified for the "moisture" content of the tea as received. If desired, the actual loss in mass at 103 °C of the sample as received may be determined and the result recorded in the test report. In such cases, the determination shall be carried out by the method described in ISO 1573.

Table – Chemical requirements for black tea

Characteristic	Requirement	Method of test
Water extract, % (m/m), minimum	32	ISO 1574
Total ash, % (m/m), maximum minimum	8 4	ISO 1575
Water-soluble ash, % (m/m), of total ash, minimum	45	ISO 1576
Alkalinity of water-soluble ash (as KOH), % (m/m), minimum maximum	1,0* 3,0*	ISO 1578
Acid-insoluble ash, % (m/m), maximum	1,0	ISO 1577
Crude fibre, % (m/m), maximum	16,5	ISO 5498

* When the alkalinity of water-soluble ash is expressed in terms of millimoles of KOH per 100 g of ground sample, the limits shall be
 – minimum 17,8
 – maximum 53,6

5 Sampling

See ISO 1839.

6 Methods of test

6.1 The samples of tea shall be tested for conformity with the chemical requirements of this International Standard by the methods of test stated in the table.

6.2 The determinations specified in the table shall be carried out on a ground sample, prepared in accordance with ISO 1572.

7 Packing and marking

7.1 Packing

The tea shall be packed in closed, clean and dry containers, made of material which does not affect the tea.

7.2 Marking

The packages of tea shall be marked in accordance with any relevant legal requirements and agreements between the interested parties.