

An entire language exists for describing a tea's characteristics. Some of the fun of tasting and becoming more familiar with tea is developing your own language to describe the aroma, flavor and physical characteristics of tea. If you want to talk like a tea expert though, below we have listed some of the more commonly used terms:

- **Astringency:** A lively and mouth drying effect on the tongue. Not bitter, but a clean and refreshing quality
- **Balance:** Various characteristics of the tea, including body, flavor and finish all come together to perfect the cup
- **Biscuity:** A freshly-baked bread smell present in some black tea like Assam
- **Body:** The tactile aspect of tea's weight and feeling in the mouth. Teas range from full to light bodied
- **Bright:** A bright liquor color or a lively, clear flavor
- **Brisk:** The mouth-puckering and lively bite found in high quality tea versus dullness
- **Character:** A tea's signature attributes depending upon origin whether its country or region
- **Citrusy:** A citrus fruit flavor like an orange or lemon
- **Complex:** A tea with depth and subtle flavor or aroma combinations
- **Finish:** The lasting taste on your tongue after swallowing the tea
- **Fruity:** A flavor characteristic of fruit, whether it be apple, peaches or Muscat
- **Flat:** Dull tea lacking freshness
- **Flowery:** A floral nose or flavor associated with high grade teas
- **Malty:** A sweet, malt flavor
- **Muscat:** Often used to describe high quality Darjeeling – the aromas and flavors of the Muscat grape
- **Pungent:** Astringent with balanced elements of briskness, brightness and strength
- **Self-drinking:** Refers to tea with complex flavor profile that does not need additional flavoring such as milk or sugar
- **Smooth:** Round bodied, fine drinking teas
- **Strength:** Refers to the intensity of flavor, color and aroma
- **Smoky:** A smoky wood aroma or flavor
- **Thick:** Describes liquor having substance, but not necessarily strength.
- **Vegetal:** A characteristic of green teas that might include grassy, herby or marine flavors.