

# Thai Nguyen - The Cradle of Vietnamese Tea

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## **History of Thai Nguyen Tea**

The history of tea production in Thai Nguyen also coincides with the history of tea in Vietnam. Before 1882, tea was grown spontaneously by local farmers at highland area and valleys surrounded giant mountains. At that time, half of harvested tea leaves in Thai Nguyen were used for drinking, and the rest was spent on processing and preserving. In 1882, the appearance of French scientists in Thai Nguyen has brought a new breath to tea production in this area. Along with existing small tea farm, huge tea plantations were established by French with modern machine and technique that resulted in rising output. Moreover, two more new types of industrial tea which includes black tea for Western European market and Chinese green tea for Northern Africa market were grown in Thai Nguyen at the same time.

After victory of the resistance war against **French colonial**, the North Vietnam government has implemented some significant policies in tea production and generate new development prospects of tea in Thai Nguyen. One of them was to create national tea plantations and co-operations to grow and produce tea. That structure today has been replaced by numerous private tea gardens and tea joint stock companies.

## **Famous tea regions in Thai Nguyen**

The most famous tea from Thai Nguyen is **Tan Cuong Tea**. This special product from Tan Cuong – Cong River area possesses an incredibly delicious taste that can mesmerize any tea drinkers including the most picky one. Each sip of hot Tan Cuong tea pouring in mouth firstly leaves a little taste of bitter on the tip of the tongue, but that taste immediately transforms to a deep sweet when the tea is off throat.

In recent years, various new tea areas have been established with unique and different tea products to serve customers in any range. Prominently among them are Trai Cai and La Bang tea village, in addition to deluxe tea plantations in Phuc Thuan, Thanh Cong and Song Cau.

## **Influence of terrain and climate on tea in Thai Nguyen**

Most tea researchers agree that Thai Nguyen terrain and weather have significant impact on the high quality tea products here. Generally, tea areas are located in valleys or on hills that are surrounded by high mountains around such as **Tam Dao** or Than Lan. These mountains shield extreme sunlight of summer as well as freezing winds of winter, so environment at those farms is amazingly appropriate for growing tea with average temperature of 22 – 23o C during the year. Humidity in Thai Nguyen also further enhances that properness with high level of rainfall from 2,000 to 2,500 mm per year.

Especially, water source in this region is also another crucial element to create the wonderful flavor of Thai Nguyen tea. Water to sprinkle large tea plantations here is originated from Cong River and Nui Coc Lake that has flown and

permeated through stone and underground water circuits to absorb mineral and use it to feed lush these green tea plants.