



Geographical Indication Product Database - Step 1-

Longjing Tea

SOURCE :

**Author : Guihong
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**Institution : INRA
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Date : 31/08/2006

DESCRIPTION :

1. NAME OF PRODUCT :

Longjing Tea (The dragon well)

2. COUNTRY AND REGION IN THE COUNTRY:

The tea is cultivated around the Western lake in the province of Zhejiang, in the south-east of China

3. TYPE OF PRODUCT : (including the possible substitutes and imitations of the product)

The name of "Tea of Longjing" is one of the varieties of green tea in China. It was placed under the protection of a GI in 2001 by the AQSIQ. For this protection, it was defined 3 zones of production "Xihu, Qiantang, Yuezhou", and apart from these three zones, some tea identically produced is named "Tea of Longjing Zhejinag". For the consumers, the various teas remain difficult to distinguish according to criteria such leaves forms and colours. Moreover, the Academy of Agriculture of China popularised a new branch of tea plant in all the country. This is the reason why it is so difficult to protect the true tea of Longjing.

4. DESCRIPTION OF THE PRODUCT AND ITS AREA (including its specific characteristics, conditions of production, main differences with the substitutes) :

The leaves of tea ready to be consumed are green, slightly gilded, smooth and flat, in shape of needles. Their infusion produces a very clear and light tea. In general, for appreciating the taste and the color, It is often preferable to infuse the tea of Longjing in a transparent glass, then it makes it possible to the drinker to admire the leaves which go up and go down in the clear green water. With some water at 85°C in one minute, the infusion is clear yellow green , with a scented flavour and a velvety taste. The hot water may be added several times.

The tea plants are often planted on hills with a mild and wet climate. The average annual temperature is around 16°C, the quantity of precipitation reaches 1500 millimetres per annum. The leaves of tea plants are often tender and small, and contain several types of vitamins and amino acids.

To have a good quality, the farmers choose to gather delicate and whole sheets. Often, to have the best quality of tea, the producers gather buds before April 5th ("Pure Light", one the 24 solar periods, which starts about on April 5th and during which people visits the tombs). In general, three types of gathered sheets represent the characters of the tea of Longjing: the heart of lotus (a bud), the flag (a bud with a leaf), the tongue of bird (a bud with two young sheets). They are different from other types of leaves of tea, which could be gathered during the seasons of the summer and the autumn. To prepare the tea, it is necessary to carry out manual operations ten times, so that it can reach its level of colour, taste, odour and form. Although now there is the new way of preparing with the machine, but quality is generally worse than the artisanal products.

There are four levels of quality. To prepare one kilo of quality tea, it is necessary to collect between 70 to 80 thousands tender buds. The price is often 300 € per kilo (it is a relative price).

LINK WITH THE GEOGRAPHICAL AREA (tradition, know how, reputation, soil, climate, etc.):

Since the tea of Longjing obtained the IG protection in 2001 by the AQSIQ, it has been defined three zones of production, zone Xihu (168 kilometers, and 900 hectares) Zone Qiantang, Zone Yuezhou. As the Xihu zone is the initial source of the production, therefore, the AQSIQ authorized exceptionally a particular IG protection of the tea produced in this zone under the name "tea of Xihu Longjing".

4. PRODUCTION SYSTEM / SUPPLY CHAIN (some data about the number of producers, processors, market structure..) :



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MARKET AND REPUTATION (size, price premium, attractiveness, growth) :

5. APPLICANT / HOLDER (IF ANY)

Craftsmen, collective companies, private companies

RELEVANCE : Why is this case important for research in general and for SINER-GI in particular ?

"Tea of Longjing" is one of the varieties of green tea with great quality and historical reputation. It is protected by the IG legislation. However, other teas, produced apart from the three zones defined, use the name "tea of Longjing of Zhejiang". Because the current tendency is to rather indicate by "Longjing" a variety of tea than a real culture in the way of producing: it is a fundamental question of thinking to guarantee some additional protections to fight against the counterfeits, to protect the name of the products and the right of the producers.

CATEGORY :

☒ Origin Product

☒ GI product

☐ Recognized GI