



## Myanmar Product Profile: Organic Green Tea

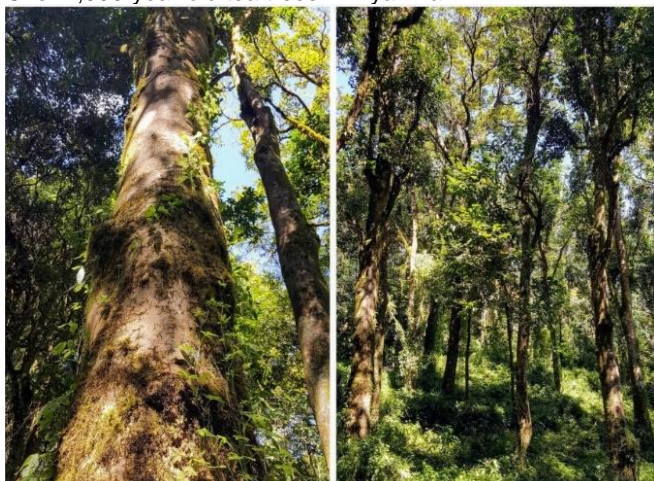
### Myanmar Green Tea

The northern part of Myanmar is believed to be the origin of green tea. A long history and tradition of processing, drinking, and even eating tea provides Myanmar tea with its unique quality. Ideal climatic conditions for growing tea ensure the fresh, natural, and clean taste of Myanmar organic green tea.

### Why You Should Buy from Myanmar

- **Myanmar green tea is grown in a mountainous region** with high altitudes, deep slopes, and excellent soil conditions, which create an ideal climate for tea plantations. An old proverb says: “For good tea leaves, let the Palaung (local people specialised in tea production) take their time up the hills”.
- **Myanmar green tea is produced without using chemicals and in socially responsible ways.** The tea processors support organic certification for farmers. They also invest in equipment, villages, and education, supporting school children and teachers.
- **Myanmar has one of the longest histories of cultivating tea in the world.** The first tea plant, which is now over one thousand years old, still exists on Mount Lwal Sal in the Northern Shan State of Myanmar. The large number of old tea trees is further evidence of Myanmar’s long tea history.

Over 1,000-year-old tea trees in Myanmar

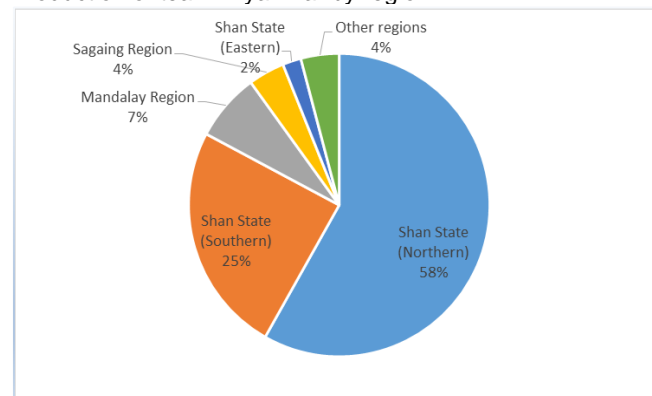


Source: Teaside

### Production Data

The tea plantation area in Myanmar increases every year. Tea is currently produced on more than 96,000 ha in Myanmar, of which 86,000 ha are harvesting area.

Production of tea in Myanmar by region



Source: Myanmar Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, 2016

More than 80% of tea is grown in the Shan State, on high altitudes of at least 1,500 metres above sea level. Namhsan, Manton, and Kyaukme in Northern Shan State, and Pinlaung, Pindaya, and Yatsauk in Southern Shan State, are the main tea production areas in Myanmar.

According to a famous Myanmar poet, U Ponnya, the first tea seeds were given to the Palaung ethnic group while they were still living in what is now Western China more than 2,000 years ago. Regardless of its origins, the Palaung people have cultivated tea for their livelihood since its introduction. Tea production is currently the main source of income for more than 600,000 Palaung people. During the harvesting season when the tea is in full bloom, the number of people involved in the tea business is even higher as tea pickers come from many different areas in Central Myanmar.

Although the tea production methods in Myanmar are still artisanal and teas are processed in a traditional way, Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) are increasing. Already, in the first year of introducing pruning and other GAP technologies, yield has increased by more than 30%.

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# Myanmar – EU Trade Helpdesk

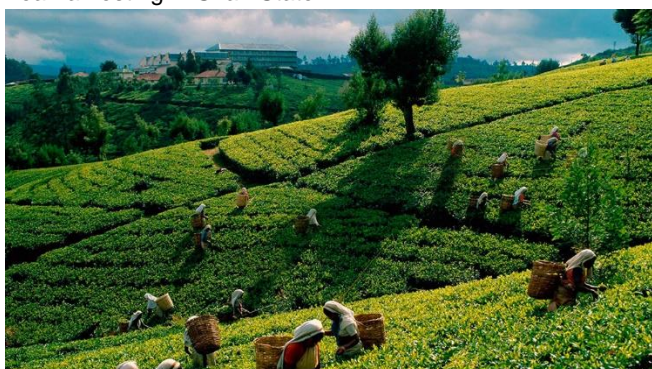


## Export Structure and Companies

Until 2013, very little green tea was exported from Myanmar, as it was unknown on the international market. However, since the recent rediscovery of Myanmar tea, demand is increasing significantly.

Currently, around 80 Myanmar companies are exporting green tea. The largest quantities of green tea from Myanmar are exported to Japan, Malaysia, and Singapore. Buyers from the European Union (EU) have also started to show interest in purchasing green tea from Myanmar. In 2016 and 2017, the main buyers in the EU were France and Germany, followed by the Netherlands. In 2018, Myanmar organic green tea was introduced to European buyers on the world's leading trade fair for organic food – BIOFACH – resulting in rapidly growing interest in Myanmar organic green tea.

Tea harvesting in Shan State



Source: Interpid Steps Myanmar

Another positive aspect of Myanmar tea is the degree of cooperation among the various partners in tea production. Many players are united under the umbrella of the Myanmar Tea Producer and Exporters Association. This association currently has about 10,000 members from different tea growing regions. It represents tea farmers, processors, and traders.

Tea processors and traders are also investing a lot in Corporate Social Responsibility in the tea value chain. To increase the living standards of tea producers, tea-processing companies are providing trainings, supporting organic certification, and education at village level, for example with scholarships.

Tea exporters are following the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles.

## Government and Support Organisations

There are several organisations and projects in Myanmar supporting the green tea sector. Some of the relevant organisations and projects are:

- Myanmar Tea Producer and Exporters Association: The main tea association in Myanmar that aims to build capacities and enhance coordination and networking among tea value chain actors.
- [Myanmar Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Producer and Exporter Association \(MFVP\)](#): The main association representing the interests of many agricultural sectors, including tea.
- In 2013, the German Government launched the [Private Sector Development Programme](#), which has supported the tea value chain in Myanmar.

Opening ceremony of the first Green Tea Model Factory



Source: GIZ

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*This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the author (Aleksandar Jovanovic) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union or any other party.*

July 2018

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