

Ceylon Tea - Instant Tea: A Growing Industry in Sri Lanka

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The vast majority of the very strictly regulated tea manufactured in Sri Lanka is orthodox loose leaf yet there are a few “unorthodox” segments which are growing: Teabags, Value-added Tea Bags (i.e. tea that has been flavored and/or blended with other botanicals), and Instant Tea specifically. Let’s have a look at Instant Tea which makes up approximately 1% of all Ceylon Tea produced and is poised to increase significantly.

Comprised of powders, concentrates, flavors and aromas, Instant Tea Technology was developed at the Tea Research Institute of Sri Lanka (TRI) where one of the main areas of research encompasses [value addition and by-products](#) of tea. This serious work is described on TRI’s website as follows:

Product-development research is carried out mainly for achieving two objectives.

- *Enhancing income through value addition*
- *Attracting different segments of consumers, especially the younger generation, who would normally not be attracted to the traditional ways of tea drinking.*

The main areas under studies are;

- *Improvement of the process for production of instant black tea*
- *Optimization of liquid tea concentrate and tea based beverages*
- *Extraction of polyphenols for commercialization*
- *Extraction of proteins from spent tea*
- *Optimization of the processes for production of novel products using liquid tea concentrate*
- *Testing refuse-tea briquettes as fuel in the tea drying process*
- *Development of sustainable, organic farming systems for tea*

Instant Tea begins as finished black or green processed tea leaves or “waste” which is the unusable by-products of orthodox production or even as green,

unprocessed tea leaves which have been harvested for the express purpose of becoming a form of Instant Tea. The leaves go through a complex manufacturing process by the end of which they are reduced to powder or concentrated form that is water soluble.



Mr. Niraj de Mel, Hayley's Global Beverages Lab
photo credit SerendipiTea

Instant Tea, comprised of: 1. Powders, 2. Liquid Concentrates, 3. Flavors and Aromas, has myriad uses and applications in so many products. Following are just a few.

Ready-to-Drink Iced Tea,

Vending Machine Tea (Hot and Cold) makes use of '3 in 1' Powders (tea, milk, and sweetener),

Soda, the coloring in Pepsi for example,

Energy Drinks make use of caffeine boosts provided by concentrated tea powder,

Cosmetics including Perfumes,

Food Additives (common in Asian markets and gaining popularity in the West),

Nutraceuticals (food components used for medicinal purposes ~ a fast growing area).

There are two instant tea factories in Sri Lanka, both are located in the Nuwara Eliya tea district. The newest is Hayleys Global Beverages, the other is CeyTea Factory.



HAYLEYS GLOBAL BEVERAGES FACTORY
photo credit The Tea House Times

“Going Beyond Traditional Tea” is the promotional phrase used by Hayleys Global Beverages, a state of the art facility built in 2016 for the sole purpose of manufacturing tea extracts. The factory, which houses a full-scale laboratory, buzzes with a highly skilled force of young engineers, scientists and seasoned tea professionals.



Hayleys Global Beverages Lab, photo credit SerendipiTea

Using a 100% natural, water based process Hayleys Global Beverages produces Ceylon Tea Powders, Ceylon Tea Concentrate, Aqueous Ceylon Tea, as well as Tea Aromas and Flavors. This innovative company creates flavoring, coloring and taste to customer specifications and requirements. A hefty 50% of raw tea material used is from Hayleys-owned gardens, the rest is from other Sri Lanka tea gardens only, their mission being to add value to Pure Ceylon Tea.

See a demo of tea tasting at Hayleys below:



Take a virtual tour of this impressive operation here:



Quite different from Hayleys Global Beverages, CeyTea Factory, located in Agarapathana, is corporate giant Unilever's instant tea factory.



CeyTea Factory (Unilever Lipton Ceylon Ltd), photo credit SerendipiTea

This site functions as a strategic unit of the Lipton Ice Tea supply chain, supplying over 70% of the Ready-to-Drink volumes sourced by Pepsi Lipton International.



Lipton Iced Tea in CeyTea Board Room, photo credit SerendipiTea

This post was prepared by Linda Villano of [SerendipiTea](#) for The Tea House Times. Image Credits: ©The Tea House Times and SerendipiTea

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