



2026

Guidelines and Regulations

Sponsored by: Australian Tea Masters



SRI LANKA 2026

FEATURE COUNTRY

For our 2026 awards, we proudly present Sri Lanka as our Feature Country, shining a spotlight on its illustrious tea heritage. Sri Lanka's central highlands, tropical climate, and centuries-old tea traditions have given rise to an incredible tapestry of teas that enchant tea enthusiasts worldwide.

Sri Lanka's Tea Craftsmanship

Sri Lanka's tea estates, situated at altitudes ranging from 600 to 6,000 meters above sea level, benefit from diverse climates—ranging from cool and dry to warm and humid. This variation in growing conditions results in unique and distinct flavour profiles for Sri Lankan teas, showcasing the exceptional quality and rich diversity of the region.

Celebrating Artisan Tea

The Sri Lanka Feature Country Class at The Golden Leaf Awards celebrates the skill, innovation, and craftsmanship of Sri Lankan tea producers. Beyond its famous black teas, Sri Lanka produces an exciting range of artisan teas, including delicate whites, specialty greens, handcrafted oolongs and innovative small-batch teas. This class celebrates both Sri Lanka's rich tea traditions and the producers continuing to shape the future of Ceylon tea.



Rules and Regulations 2026

Golden Leaf Awards Overview

The Golden Leaf Awards (GLA) is an independently organised competition and Australia's only international tea competition, judged by professional cuppers, to distinguish the highest quality & best tasting teas commercially available in the Australasian Marketplace. This includes tea available on e-commerce platforms as well as via Australian sellers or shopfronts.

The GLA is made up of 13 award classes: White Tea Award, Green Tea Award, Matcha Tea Award, Yellow Tea Award, Oolong Tea Award, Black Tea Award, Pu-erh Tea Award, Chai Tea Award, Herbal Award, Wellness Blends, Iced Tea Award, Best Tea House Award, and Other Awards.

We are also excited to announce the return of our Feature Country category. Each year a different tea producing country is selected as the Feature Country in an effort to showcase that particular countries' teas to a wider audience. **This year the Feature Country is Sri Lanka.**

We have six types of tea in our Feature Country Class: four specifically for Artisan tea including Black Tea, Green Tea, Oolong Tea and White Tea. This category will only accept entries directly from Sri Lankan tea farmers and companies. Other companies not based in Sri Lanka can enter their teas under any other category.

Each class consists of its own categories. All entries will be judged by a select panel of experienced judges.

The Golden Leaf Awards has been developed by Australian Tea Masters Association Pty. Ltd., to promote and provide recognition to the high-quality teas that are available globally but particularly in Australia.

Winners of the Golden Leaf Awards will be announced on the 1st of February 2027, personally and in the press release. Winning companies receive a formal announcement letter that includes the tea's ranking as well as a print-ready seal that can be used for all promotional materials and packaging.

This year we are also requesting that all entrants complete a brief bio about themselves or their company after the close of the Awards. We are building a new page featuring our entrants and winners to highlight the outstanding variety of specialty teas and herbal tisanes available in Australia and the amazing and inspiring packaging, websites and tea menus produced by tea companies and tea houses in Australia and internationally.



Tea and Herbal Blend entries

1) Summary

Each submission into the competition is evaluated blind and through organoleptic analysis of the following characteristics: brewed colour, brewed aroma, brewed flavour, brewed mouthfeel, and brewed harmony. An overall numerical value on a 100-point scale is then calculated based on the ratings of each characteristic above. Gold, Silver, and Bronze place winning entries are determined by rank.

2) Important Dates

7 th October 2026	Entries Open
5 th December 2026	Entries Close
11 th December 2026	Last date to receive submissions for judging
15 th December – 22 nd January 2027	Judging Period
3 rd February 2027	Winners announced

3) Eligibility

Any company in the world that has teas commercially available in Australasia. This includes tea or herbal tisanes available on e-commerce platforms as well as via Australian sellers or shopfronts.

4) Fees

- i. The cost to enter is \$65 per submission; **there are no refunds.**
- ii. All entries must be made through the Golden Leaf Awards [website](#).

5) Terms and Conditions

Upon entry into the Golden Leaf Awards, and in exchange for the opportunity to win, each entrant agrees:

- i. Permit the GLA to use the competitor's name, entry name, and any images/ media in any format taken at the competition without charge for the purpose of promotion of the competition and its award celebration.
- ii. Entrants are highly encouraged to include use of the official seal image and/or title "Golden Leaf Awards Winner" and words, "Golden Leaf Awards" in reference to entrant's winning teas in verbal, electronic or printed marketing materials.
- iii. The official seal image and the title, "Golden Leaf Awards Winner" and the words "Golden Leaf Awards" are non-transferable.
 - ☐ Only submitting companies, entrants, have use of the seal and titles for promotional and marketing purposes.
- iv. All entries are evaluated blind by non-entrants: professional cuppers and foremost retail buyers of tea. Entrants may not attempt to contact judges prior to the competition in regards to submissions.



- v. Evaluations will be held at the Australian Tea Masters Training Centre in Geelong, Victoria.
- ☐ All entry samples must be shipped to the GLA headquarters no later than 11th December 2026. Any submission received after that date will be automatically disqualified.
 - ☐ Please send submissions to:
Golden Leaf Awards
PO BOX 4099
Geelong
Victoria 3220
Australia
- vi. All submissions must be packaged and labelled according to the guidelines following. Any submission packaged and/or labelled incorrectly may be disqualified.
- vii. Entrants can submit into numerous categories and multiple submissions per category; however, only the highest rated tea submitted by the company in the category will place as a winner if one is ranked.
- viii. Submissions into any given category must meet the category description. Any submission that fails to meet the definition may be disqualified.

Serial Numbers

- These are issued upon payment.
- The invoice will show a list with all your entries and then a list of the serial numbers.
- The serial numbers are displayed in the same sequence as your entries.



6) Categories

Golden Leaf Awards – Tea and Herbal Blend categories

Class	Category	Awards
White Tea		
	White Tea W001 – Single Origin	Gold, Silver, Bronze
	White Tea W002 – Natural Blend	Gold, Silver, Bronze
	White Tea W003 – Flavoured Blend	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Green Tea		
	Green Tea GR001 – Japan (excl. Matcha)	Gold, Silver, Bronze
	Green Tea GR002 – Single Origin Korea	Gold, Silver, Bronze
	Green Tea GR003 – Single Origin China	Gold, Silver, Bronze
	Green Tea GR004 – Single Origin India	Gold, Silver, Bronze
	Green Tea GR005 – Single Origin Sri Lanka	Gold, Silver, Bronze
	Green Tea GR006 – Best Australian Green Tea	Gold, Silver, Bronze
	Green Tea GR007 – Single Origin Kenya	Gold, Silver, Bronze
	Green Tea GR008 – Best Green Tea Worldwide	Gold, Silver, Bronze
	Green Tea GR009 – Natural Blend	Gold, Silver, Bronze
	Green Tea GR010 – Flavoured Blend	Gold, Silver, Bronze
	Green Tea GR011 – Tea Bags (flavoured)	Gold, Silver, Bronze
	Green Tea GR012 – Tea Bags (non-flavoured)	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Matcha Tea		
	Matcha Tea M001 – Commercial Grade	Gold, Silver, Bronze
	Matcha Tea M002 – Ceremonial Grade	Gold, Silver, Bronze
	Matcha Tea M003 – Matcha Genmaicha	Gold, Silver, Bronze
	Matcha Tea M004 – Matcha Blend	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Yellow Tea		
	Y001 – Yellow Tea	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Oolong Tea		
	Oolong Tea OG001 – Light	Gold, Silver, Bronze
	Oolong Tea OG002 – Dark	Gold, Silver, Bronze
	Oolong Tea OG003 – Oriental Beauty	Gold, Silver, Bronze
	Oolong Tea OG004 – Wuyi Rock	Gold, Silver, Bronze
	Oolong Tea OG005 – Natural Blend	Gold, Silver, Bronze
	Oolong Tea OG006 – Flavoured Blend	Gold, Silver, Bronze



Black Tea

Black Tea B001 – Black Breakfast Blend	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Black Tea B002 - Flavoured (not Earl Grey)	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Black Tea B003 – Natural Blend (Unflavoured)	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Black Tea B004 – Tea Bag Blend (non-flavoured)	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Black Tea B005 – Tea Bag Blend (flavoured)	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Black Tea B006 – Traditional Earl Grey	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Black Tea B007 – French & Non-Traditional Earl Grey	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Black Tea B008 – Ceylon (Sri Lanka)	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Black Tea B009 – Darjeeling	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Black Tea B010 – Kenya	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Black Tea B011 – India	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Black Tea B012 – Australasia	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Black Tea B013 – Best Australian Black Tea	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Black Tea B014 – Single Origin Worldwide	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Black Tea B015 – Single Origin China	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Black Tea B016 – Single Origin Indonesia	Gold, Silver, Bronze

Puerh Tea

Puerh Tea PH001 – Sheng	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Puerh Tea PH002 – Shou	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Puerh Tea PH003 – Natural Blend	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Puerh Tea PH003 – Flavoured Blend	Gold, Silver, Bronze

Purple Tea

Purple Tea PT001 – Purple Tea	Gold, Silver, Bronze
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Feature Country: Sri Lanka

Feature Country FC001 – Black Tea	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Feature Country FC002 – Green Tea	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Feature Country FC003 – Oolong Tea	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Feature Country FC004 – White Tea	Gold, Silver, Bronze

Herbal Blends

Herbal HB001 – Loose Blend (Unflavoured)	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Herbal HB002 – Loose Blend (Flavoured)	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Herbal HB003 – Tea Bag Blend	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Herbal HB004 – Fruit Infusion	Gold, Silver, Bronze



Herbal HB005 – Rooibos Blend	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Herbal HB006 – Australiana Blend	Gold, Silver, Bronze

Wellness Blends

Functional/Wellness WE001 – Herbal (Unflavoured, Caffeine Free)	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Functional/Wellness WE002 – Herbal (Flavoured, Caffeine Free)	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Functional/Wellness WE003 – Tea-based (Unflavoured, Contains Caffeine)	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Functional/Wellness WE004 – Tea-based Blend (flavoured, Contains Caffeine)	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Functional/Wellness WE005 – Powdered, Caffeine-free	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Functional/Wellness WE006 – Powdered, Contains Caffeine	Gold, Silver, Bronze

Iced Tea

Iced Tea IT001 – Commercially Available RTD	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Iced Tea IT002 – Freshly Made	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Iced Tea IT003 – Cocktail Blend	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Iced Tea IT004 – Commercially Available Sparkling RTD	Gold, Silver, Bronze

Best Tea House

Best Tea House BTH001 – Victoria	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Best Tea House BTH002 – NSW (& ACT)	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Best Tea House BTH003 – Queensland	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Best Tea House BTH004 – Tasmania	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Best Tea House BTH005 – Northern Territory	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Best Tea House BTH006 – South Australia	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Best Tea House BTH007 – Western Australia	Gold, Silver, Bronze

Other Awards

Other ER001 – Best Tea/Food Inspired Menu	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Other ER002 – Best Tea Menu	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Other ER003 – Best Tea Packaging	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Other ER004 – Best Tea Website	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Other ER005 – Kombucha	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Other ER006 – Best Tea Publication	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Other ER007 – Best Tea Event (Australia)	Gold, Silver, Bronze



Other ER008 – Best Tea Event (Worldwide)	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Other ER009 – Best Tea-Inspired Beauty Product	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Other ER010 – Best Global Tea Initiative	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Other ER011 – Best New Tea Educator (Australia)	Gold, Silver, Bronze
Other ER012 – Best New Tea Educator (International)	Gold, Silver, Bronze



7) Categories Definitions

Single Origin – Tea from one single estate and/or plantation.

White Tea – Made according to classical styles of processing. Leaves are not processed by frying or rolling, but by withered controls and gentle oven, cool drying and/or sun drying techniques, alone or in combination.

Green Tea- Green tea of any variety from any origin (unless origin is specified within the category).

Matcha Tea - Finely ground green tea powder from any origin.

Oolong Tea - Oolong tea of any variety from any origin (unless origin is specified within the category).

Black Tea- Black, fully oxidized tea of any variety from any origin (unless origin is specified within the category).

Puerh Tea – Straight puerh tea, green or dark, loose or compressed.

Purple Tea – Purple Tea (*Camellia sinensis*) produced from the *Assamica* cultivar with increased anthocyanins in the leaves.

Flavoured Puerh Tea- Puerh tea of any variety and from any origin blended with herbs, fruits, essential oils, or natural flavours, spices and/or any other flavouring agents.

Flavoured Black Tea- Black tea of any variety and from any origin blended with herbs, fruits, essential oils, spices and/or any other flavouring agents.

Flavoured Oolong Tea- Oolong tea of any variety and from any origin blended with herbs, fruits, essential oils, spices and/or any other flavouring agents.

Flavoured Green Tea – Green tea of any variety and from any origin blended with herbs, fruits, essential oils, spices and/or other flavouring agents.

Flavoured White Tea – White tea of any variety and from any origin blended with herbs, fruits, essential oils, spices and/or other flavouring agents.

Natural Puerh Tea Blend- Puerh tea of any variety and from any origin blended with herbs, fruits, natural flavours and/or spices that does not include any artificial flavouring agents.

Natural Black Tea Blend- Black tea of any variety and from any origin blended with herbs, fruits, natural flavours and/or spices that does not include any artificial flavouring agents.

Natural Oolong Tea Blend- Oolong tea of any variety and from any origin blended with herbs, fruits, natural flavours and/or spices that does not include any artificial flavouring agents.

Natural Green Tea Blend – Green tea of any variety and from any origin blended with herbs, fruits, natural flavours and/or spices that does not include any artificial flavouring agents.



Natural White Tea Blend – White tea of any variety and from any origin blended with herbs, fruits, natural flavours and/or spices that does not include any artificial flavouring agents

Black Breakfast Blend – Blends of Black tea(s) of any variety and from any origin blended together without other ingredients.

Light Oolong Tea – Oolong tea that is up to 50% oxidised.

Dark Oolong Tea – Oolong tea that is over 50% oxidised.

Herbal Blends – Botanical blends that do not contain *Camellia sinensis*.

Herbal Blends – Australian Native Blend – A botanical blend with at least one Australian native ingredient

Herbal Blends (Flavoured) – A botanical blend containing essential oils and/or other flavouring agents in addition to herbs, spices, fruits, flowers or other botanicals.

Herbal Blends (Unflavoured) – A botanical blend containing only herbs, spices, fruits, flowers or other botanicals with no other enhancements present.

Wellness Blend (Unflavoured) – a blend of botanicals (herbs, spices, fruits, flowers) with no other enhancements present with a wellness benefit. Blends containing *Camellia sinensis* should be entered in the 'Contains Caffeine' category.

Wellness Blend (Flavoured) – a blend of botanicals (herbs, spices, fruits, flowers) with essential oils or other flavouring agents and with a wellness benefit. Blends containing *Camellia sinensis* should be entered in the 'Contains Caffeine' category.

Chai Tea Traditional – These chai teas contain tea (*Camellia sinensis*) as an ingredient.

Chai Tea Non-Traditional – Chai teas in this category are formulated without tea (e.g. Dandelion, Rooibos, Honeybush, Turmeric)

Chai Tea Sticky or Wet – Chai teas in these categories are blended with honey, agave syrup, rice syrup etc.



8) Entry Preparation

TEA AND HERBAL BLEND CATEGORIES (EXCLUDING ICED TEA)

- i. Pack your tea entry into a 20g sample bag. Please note that you must be careful to pack as closely as possible to 20g. Entries that are 5g too light or too heavy may not be judged.
 - ii. Please write your registration code on the bag. Do not attach any other personally identifiable information (no name, company, email, etc.).
 - iii. Please print in block letters to aid readability. Entries that cannot be identified will not be judged.
 - iv. Enclose the sample bag in an adequate postage packet. Send this packet to:
Golden Leaf Awards
PO BOX 4099
Geelong
Victoria 3220
Australia
- ☐ Entries sent in an open pouch, or pouches that open easily and result in tea falling out of the packaging, will be disqualified upon receipt. The Competition Coordinators will not touch or re-package any tea product.
 - ☐ Entries sent without a label noting the category may be disqualified upon receipt. Competition Coordinators will not assume which category the tea belongs in.
 - ☐ Label information must include the entry's category and unique entry code. Competition Coordinators will not assume entrants meant to send a different sample.

ICED TEA CATEGORIES

IT001: Commercially Available (RTD)

- i. Bottle a 250mL sample of your drink in a clear, unlabelled plastic bottle if possible.
- ii. Please write your registration code on the bag. Do not attach any other personally identifiable information (no name, company, email, etc.). Please print in block letters to aid readability. Entries that cannot be identified will not be judged.
- iii. Enclose all of the above together in an adequate postage packet and send to the address below.

IT002: Freshly Made

- i. Enclose all ingredients required to make a 250mL sample, along with clear preparation instructions.
- ii. Please write your registration code on the bag. Do not attach any other personally identifiable information (no name, company, email, etc.). Please print in block letters to aid readability. Entries that cannot be identified will not be judged.
- iii. Enclose all of the above together in an adequate postage packet, and send to the address below.

IT003: Cocktail

- i. Enclose all ingredients required to make a 250mL sample, along with clear preparation instructions.
- ii. Please write your registration code on the bag. Do not attach any other personally identifiable information (no name, company, email, etc.). Please print in block letters to aid readability. Entries that cannot be identified will not be judged.
- iii. Enclose all of the above together in an adequate postage packet, and send to the address below.

IT001: Commercially Available (RTD)

- i. Bottle a 250mL sample of your drink in a clear, unlabelled plastic bottle if possible; drinks may be sent in their original packaging to preserve carbonation.
- ii. Please write your registration code on the bag. Do not attach any other personally identifiable information (no name, company, email, etc.). Please print in block letters to aid readability. Entries that cannot be identified will not be judged.



- iii. Enclose all of the above together in an adequate postage packet, and send to the address below.

BEST TEA HOUSE

- i. Please supply the following:
 - a. Between one and three photos of the tea house
 - b. A copy of the tea menu
 - c. A copy of the food menu (if applicable)
 - d. A list of complimentary services on offer
- ii. Write a note with your registration code. Please print in block letters to aid readability. Entries that cannot be identified will not be judged.
- iii. Enclose the note and the materials collected in Step 1, and send to:

Golden Leaf Awards
PO BOX 4099
Geelong
Victoria 3220
Australia

OTHER ENTRIES

- i. Collect the appropriate materials based on the category you have selected. Please refer below to determine which materials to collect.
- ii. Write a note with your registration code. Please print in block letters to aid readability. Entries that cannot be identified will not be judged.
- iii. Enclose the note and the materials collected in Step 1, and send to:
Golden Leaf Awards
PO BOX 4099
Geelong
Victoria 3220
Australia

ER001: Best Tea/Food Inspired Menu

- ☐ A copy of the tea menu
- ☐ A copy of the food menu.
- ☐ (if these menus are combined into one, please only send the combined menu)

ER002: Best Tea Menu

- ☐ A copy of the tea menu.

ER003: Best Tea Packaging

- ☐ A sample of your packaging.

ER004: Best Tea Website

- ☐ A link/address to your website.



ER005: Kombucha

- ☐ Please submit a 250ml bottle of your kombucha, please ensure there is no branding or labels on the bottle.

ER006: Best Tea Publication

- ☐ Please submit a copy of your publication (book, magazine and/or other)

ER007: Best Tea Event - Australia

- ☐ Please submit a copy of your most recent event program or brief and a link to your website

ER008: Best Tea Event – Worldwide

- ☐ Please submit a copy of your most recent event program or brief and a link to your website

ER009: Best Tea Inspired Beauty Product

- ☐ Please send us a sample of your product with some information about how it has been inspired by tea

ER010: Best Tea Initiative – Worldwide

- ☐ Please submit a brief about your initiative or event and how it promotes tea.

ER011/ ER012: Best New Tea Educator

- ☐ Please submit a brief outlining your educational initiative or how you structure and deliver your tea courses. Submissions should highlight:
 - **Curriculum & Delivery:** Your teaching methodology, course structure, and sensory/technical focus.
 - **Student & Industry Impact:** How your training empowers students, promotes tea culture, or supports industry growth.
 - **Innovation:** Any unique approaches to learning, accessibility, or business and digital strategy integration.



9) Competition Procedures

- a) Upon receipt of entry forms, all submissions receive a unique code identifier.
- b) Upon receipt of submissions, Competition Coordinators check the codes on the outside of each packet. The tea is never opened. Submissions are then separated into categories and stored in a dark, cool room until evaluation day.
- c) Roughly twenty (20) minutes before a given category is evaluated, the teas are opened and poured into matching coded paper boats in a private room.
- d) The boats are then transferred to the cupping room and placed on the tables in alignment with the corresponding codes there.
- e) The category is cupped and evaluated.
 - i) Categories are cupped in an order based on best for palate, caffeine levels, and primary flavours.

10) Golden Leaf Awards Entry Form

Entry is available [online](#). Competition Management will send receipt confirmation.



Steeping Methods

Teas will be steeped in traditional professional cupping sets which hold about 5.5oz (162ml) of water. Each tea will be prepared using 3g of tea, unless otherwise noted below.

Time and temperature will be controlled based on the grid below.

Straight matcha category will be prepared by weight; whisking 1.5g of matcha to 2.3oz (68ml) of water at 185°F (79°C) in a warm dry cupping bowl.

Matcha Blend submissions must include directions on the label noting how much powder (by weight) to how much water (by volume); example 4g per 8oz. If no directions are given, we will prepare this tea using 2g per 6oz (177ml). Matcha Blend.

TEA	TIME	TEMPERATURE
White Tea (leaf & buds)	4 minutes	80°C / 176°F
White Tea (buds only)	3 minutes	80°C / 176°F
Green Tea	3 minutes	85°C / 185°F
Light Oolong Tea	3 minutes	90°C / 194°F
Dark Oolong Tea	4 minutes	90°C / 194°F
Black Tea	5 minutes	100°C / 212°F
Darjeeling	4 minutes	90°C / 194°F
Pu-erh/Dark Tea	5 minutes	100°C / 212°F
Chai	4 minutes	100°C / 212°F
Rooibos	5 minutes	100°C / 212°F
Herbal / Wellness Tisane	5 minutes	100°C / 212°F

Important Contact Information

Email: info@goldenleafawards.com.au

Contact number: 0400 918 892

Voon Chern Han

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