



JAPAN INFORMATION
AND CULTURE CENTER
在米国日本大使館広報文化センター

TEACHING TUESDAY

TEA CEREMONY

Chado, also known as chanoyu (茶の湯) or sado (茶道) or the Way of Tea, is the Japanese tea ceremony involving the preparation and serving of powdered matcha (抹茶). If loose leaf tea is used instead, it is called senchado (煎茶道, the way of sencha). There are two types of chado: the ochakai (茶会), which is a shorter and simpler ceremony, and the chaji (茶事), a formal tea ceremony that can last more than four hours.

The current form of chado was first codified by a Zen Buddhist monk named Sen no Rikyo in the 16th century. At its simplest, it involves the careful, ritual preparation of tea before guests. Sweets are also provided to compliment and balance the bitter flavour of the green tea. At ochakai, a thin green tea (薄茶 usucha) is prepared by whipping together matcha and hot water and serving the tea in individual bowls. In contrast, chaji involves a thick tea (濃茶 koicha) that is prepared using three times as much tea that is kneaded together with the water and served in one bowl shared among many guests.

For each individual tea ceremony, everything from the tea implements to the arrangement of the room and surroundings is carefully chosen to be in harmony with the season and the spirit of the occasion. Often, they work together to tell a story through implicit references to history, poetry, art, and tea tradition. There is a deep connection of respect and consideration between the hosts and guest, as the objective of the ceremony to create a relaxed atmosphere for communication. While the ultimate aim is said to be the attainment of deep spiritual satisfaction through the drinking of tea and through silent contemplation, it is also a ceremony to strengthen the bonds of friendship.