

# Sustainable Tea Tourism and Heritage Preservation

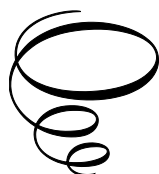


# Sustainable Tea Tourism and Heritage Preservation

Edited by

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and Biswanath Ganguly

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# CHAPTER 1

## BEYOND THE CUP: THE JOURNEY OF TEA TOURISM AND ITS IMPACTS

MAHALAKSHMI R, P.RAJA PHD  
AND ARUN MURUGAN E

### **Abstract**

Gastronomy tourism has emerged as a key element of the tourist experience, offering unique opportunities to explore local culture and traditions. Among these, tea culture tourism has gained significant attention as a specialized form of travel. Tea tourism focuses on the history, traditions, and practices surrounding tea cultivation and consumption. Tea tourism not only provides visitors with immersive experiences, such as visiting tea estates, participating in tea tastings, and learning about tea-making processes, but also supports the promotion of local heritage and sustainable tourism practices. Tea tourism contributes to the growth of rural economies, creates employment opportunities, and fosters cultural exchange between tourists and local communities. This chapter looks at how tea tourism has developed and what impact it has on local communities and economies. And how this form of tourism helps in preserving tea-related traditions, supports rural livelihoods, and allows visitors to experience the beauty of tea-growing regions.

**Keywords:** Gastronomy, Tea, Culture, History, Tourism

### **1.1 Introduction**

A tea tourist is a traveler drawn by the aroma of tradition, Tracing the roots of tea from plantation to potion. Sipping stories steeped in culture and

time, They seek not just a drink, but a journey sublime. Tea culture ecotourism offers immersive cultural experiences. Promotes environmental conservation and cultural preservation<sup>1</sup>. Tea tourism is an eco-friendly niche in agro-tourism, offering immersive experiences related to tea production. It promotes sustainable practices, community empowerment, and economic development in tea-growing regions, aligning with Sustainable Development Goals while preserving cultural and environmental heritage<sup>2</sup>. It involves travelling to tea-producing areas to learn about the customs, culture, and methods of tea production there. By customising trips, encouraging sustainability, and stimulating local economies, integrating smart tourism data improves these experiences for both tourists and local people<sup>3</sup>. Because of its many health advantages, tea is one of the most widely consumed plants in the world. Drinking green tea has been linked to lower blood glucose and total cholesterol levels, a lower risk of ischaemic heart disease, and a significant stress-reduction effect<sup>4</sup>. Tea tourism generates employment opportunities, supporting the peoples, thereby strengthening the rural economy. It attracts visitors who contribute to local businesses, from tea plantations to handicraft shops. Increased tourism revenue enhances infrastructure, healthcare, and education in these areas. As a result, it improves the overall quality of life and raises local income levels<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Shaowen Cheng et al., “Tea Tourism Development in Xinyang, China: Stakeholders’ View,” *Tourism Management Perspectives* 2–3 (April 1, 2012): 28–34, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2011.12.001>.

<sup>2</sup> H. H. S. P. Sewwandi, “Tea Tourism Landscape Development through a Sustainable Alternative Livelihood Approach: A Case Study of Pedro Tea Estate, Nuwara Eliya, Sri Lanka,” *FARU Journal* 11, no. 1 (October 18, 2024): 1–9, <https://doi.org/10.4038/faruj.v11i1.309>.

<sup>3</sup> Ashokkumar Palaniyandi et al., “Enhancing Tea Tourism Experiences by Utilizing Smart Tourism Analytics,” in *Advancing Smart Tourism Through Analytics* (IGI Global Scientific Publishing, 2025), 165–82, <https://www.igi-global.com/chapter/enhancing-tea-tourism-experiences-by-utilizing-smart-tourism-analytics/362483>.

<sup>4</sup> Tereza Koláčková et al., “Matcha Tea: Analysis of Nutritional Composition, Phenolics and Antioxidant Activity,” *Plant Foods for Human Nutrition* 75, no. 1 (March 2020): 48–53, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11130-019-00777-z>.

<sup>5</sup> Bidisha Hazarika et al., “Tea Tourism: Navigating the Future of Assam’s Agritourism,” *Journal of Scientific Research And Reports* 30, no. 4 (2024): 77–88, [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Diganta-Bora/publication/378518039\\_Tea\\_Tourism\\_Navigating\\_the\\_Future\\_of\\_Assam's\\_Agritourism/links/660628d7390c214cfd23ccdd/Tea-Tourism-Navigating-the-Future-of-Assams-Agritourism.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Diganta-Bora/publication/378518039_Tea_Tourism_Navigating_the_Future_of_Assam's_Agritourism/links/660628d7390c214cfd23ccdd/Tea-Tourism-Navigating-the-Future-of-Assams-Agritourism.pdf).

Assam and Darjeeling are two of India's well-known tea areas <sup>6</sup>. Assam's tea sector is vital for economy and employment<sup>7</sup>. Tea cultivation significantly impacts local economy and culture and the Tea tourism offers unique cultural and natural experiences <sup>8</sup>. A destination's credibility and the authenticity of its experiences play a major role in attracting tourists. When a place has a strong reputation and offers genuine cultural experiences, visitors are more likely to trust and enjoy their trip. Additionally, the way people perceive a destination and their attitudes toward it influence their decision to visit. A positive image and good reviews can increase tourist interest and boost travel demand <sup>9</sup>. Tea tourism offers visitors a chance to explore tea factories, museums, gardens, and heritage houses, providing insights into the tea-making process. Tourists can engage in hands-on activities like harvesting fresh tea leaves, tasting different varieties, and learning traditional brewing techniques. These experiences help visitors appreciate the art of tea production while also supporting local communities. The combination of history, culture, and interactive activities makes tea tourism both interesting and enjoyable <sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Shuvasree Banerjee and Pankaj Kumar Tyagi, "Tea Destinations of India and Sustainable Solid Waste Management: Sustainability and Environmental Development in Tea Destinations," in *Solid Waste Management and Disposal Practices in Rural Tourism* (IGI Global, 2025), 467–94, <https://www.igi-global.com/chapter/tea-destinations-of-india-and-sustainable-solid-waste-management/360136>.

<sup>7</sup> Bidisha Hazarika et al., "Tea Tourism: Navigating the Future of Assam's Agritourism," *Journal of Scientific Research And Reports* 30, no. 4 (2024): 77–88, [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Diganta-Bora/publication/378518039\\_Tea\\_Tourism\\_Navigating\\_the\\_Future\\_of\\_Assam's\\_Agritourism/links/660628d7390c214cfd23ccdd/Tea-Tourism-Navigating-the-Future-of-Assams-Agritourism.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Diganta-Bora/publication/378518039_Tea_Tourism_Navigating_the_Future_of_Assam's_Agritourism/links/660628d7390c214cfd23ccdd/Tea-Tourism-Navigating-the-Future-of-Assams-Agritourism.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> Palaniyandi et al., "Enhancing Tea Tourism Experiences by Utilizing Smart Tourism Analytics."

<sup>9</sup> Enakshi Dutta et al., "Examining Tourists' Intentions to Participate in Tea Tourism. An Emerging Market Context," *Turyzm* 33, no. 2 (2023): 145–56, <https://www.cceol.com/search/article-detail?id=1215712>.

<sup>10</sup> Gökhan Yılmaz and Saurabh Kumar Dixit, "Analyzing Tea Tourism Products and Experiences from India and Turkey: Supply Proclivities," *Tourism: An International Interdisciplinary Journal* 71, no. 2 (2023): 331–48, <https://hrcak.srce.hr/clanak/434701>.

## 1.2 Structural overview

### 1.2.1 The Evolution of Tea Tourism: From Imperial China to Global Tradition

During his reign from 1660 until 1685, King Charles II contributed to the popularity of tea in England. Later, Queen Anne, who ruled from 1702 to 1714, introduced new ways to serve tea, such as using silver pots for milk and sugar instead of china. At the end of the eighteenth century, Anne, Duchess of Bedford, established the custom of “afternoon tea.” In order to bridge the gap between lunch and dinner, she started serving a mini meal consisting of tea, snacks, and pastries<sup>11</sup>. The history of tea tourism is closely linked to regional economic growth and cultural customs. Tea tourism started in imperial China when intellectuals visited tea springs and producing regions to improve their tea-tasting abilities, starting a custom that has developed over centuries<sup>12</sup>. Tea has long been associated with aesthetic endeavours<sup>13</sup>. Since the seventh century, authors officials have been visiting high-quality tea springs and producing regions in imperial China, which is where tea tourism first emerged. Tea-related travel began with this exploration, which promoted tea tourism and contacts with Buddhists and Taoists<sup>14</sup>. The British introduced tea cultivation to India in the early 19th century to compete with China's tea monopoly. Darjeeling became the first region to cultivate tea commercially, laying the founda-

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<sup>11</sup> Annette M. Tomei, “O N C OOKING: A T EXTBOOK OF C ULINARY F UNDAMENTALS by Sarah R. Labensky and Alan M. House with Steven Labensky and Priscilla Martel,” *Food, Culture & Society* 11, no. 3 (September 2008): 404–7, <https://doi.org/10.2752/175174408X347946>.

<sup>12</sup> Libo Yan and Kunbing Xiao, “Ancient Origins of Tea Tourism,” in *Routledge Handbook of Tea Tourism* (Routledge, 2022), 15–22, <https://api.taylorfrancis.com/content/chapters/edit/download?identifierName=doi&identifierValue=10.4324/9781003197041-3&type=chapterpdf>.

<sup>13</sup> Lee Jolliffe, “Connecting Tea and Tourism,” *Tea and Tourism: Tourists, Traditions and Transformations*. Ed.: Lee Jolliffe, *Clevedon Channel View Publications*, 2007, 3–20, [https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=cS3XBQAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA3&dq=Jolliffe,+L.+\(2007\).+Tea+and+tourism:&ots=1hsQ9m19Ln&sig=RrtexEF\\_Nppr9EEExN8as8fbsRvw](https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=cS3XBQAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA3&dq=Jolliffe,+L.+(2007).+Tea+and+tourism:&ots=1hsQ9m19Ln&sig=RrtexEF_Nppr9EEExN8as8fbsRvw).

<sup>14</sup> Libo Yan and Kunbing Xiao, “Ancient Origins of Tea Tourism,” in *Routledge Handbook of Tea Tourism* (Routledge, 2022), 15–22, <https://api.taylorfrancis.com/content/chapters/edit/download?identifierName=doi&identifierValue=10.4324/9781003197041-3&type=chapterpdf>.

tion for India's renowned tea industry <sup>15</sup>. In India, tea tourism encompasses activities including harvesting tea, tasting tea, and seeing tea factories, gardens, and museums <sup>16</sup>.

### 1.2.2 Tea Tourism: A Journey through Culture, Heritage, and Flavor

Tea is not just a beverage but a key attraction in tourism, drawing visitors to tea estates, tasting sessions, and cultural experiences. Its global appeal makes it a valuable product that enhances gastronomic and cultural tourism <sup>17</sup>. Tea tourism provides visitors with immersive gastronomic experiences by allowing them to actively participate in tea tasting, brewing, and pairing with local cuisine. It deepens cultural connections as tourists learn about traditional tea rituals and the history behind different tea varieties <sup>18</sup>. Tea tourism creates a direct connection between consumers and the natural landscapes where tea is grown, allowing visitors to witness the entire journey from leaf to cup. Touring tea plantations provides a deeper appreciation of traditional farming methods and sustainable practices <sup>19</sup>. Tea tourism highlights local food traditions and strengthens community identity through unique tea-based flavors and experiences. It promotes creative tourism routes, such as tea trails and heritage tours, attracting diverse visitors. Storytelling adds depth by sharing the history, culture, and per-

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<sup>15</sup> Shuvasree Banerjee and Pankaj Kumar Tyagi, "Exploring the Booming Tea Tourist Industry and Unconventional Tourism through the Ritual of Drinking Tea in India," *Journal of Ethnic Foods* 11, no. 1 (February 5, 2024): 5, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s42779-023-00215-1>.

<sup>16</sup> Yilmaz and Kumar Dixit, "Analyzing Tea Tourism Products and Experiences from India and Turkey."

<sup>17</sup> Wenping Xiong, "A Study on Tea Culture Tourism Development in Jiangxi Province," in *2016 International Forum on Management, Education and Information Technology Application* (Atlantis Press, 2016), 377–82, <https://www.atlantis-press.com/article/25850378.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> Neda Torabi Farsani, Marzieh Hekmat, and Seyedeh Meral Taaghob, "Future Research for Promoting Tea Tourism in Rural Areas of Gilan Province, Iran," *Journal of Research and Rural Planning* 12, no. 3 (2023): 1–16, [https://jrrp.um.ac.ir/article/view/article\\_43828.html](https://jrrp.um.ac.ir/article/view/article_43828.html).

<sup>19</sup> JARC Sandaruwani, G. V. H. Dinusha, and RSSW Arachchi, "HOSPITALITY TEA CULTURE," *Routledge Handbook of Tea Tourism*, 2022, <https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=McyUEAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PT175&dq=Hospitality+Tea+Culture&ots=jkqhDgZXXc&sig=crXAJNksfC-Bfl5mU851ba2DqrQ>.

sonal connections behind tea <sup>20</sup>. Tea culture plays a vital role in regional tourism by offering immersive experiences that celebrate local traditions and craftsmanship. Tea ceremonies, tastings, and festivals bring people together, fostering social connections and cultural exchange. These unique traditions appeal to gastronomy-focused travelers who seek authentic flavors and culinary heritage. Tea culture differs across regions due to variations in climate, traditions, and historical influences, shaping unique tea-growing and consumption practices. Some regions have centuries-old tea ceremonies, while others emphasize modern production and commercial tourism. Ethnographic studies explore these cultural aspects, examining how tea tourism impacts local identities, traditions, and economies. Understanding these differences helps preserve heritage and promote sustainable tourism development <sup>21</sup>. By highlighting tea's historical and cultural significance, destinations can attract more visitors and promote sustainable tourism <sup>22</sup>. Assam, known for its bold and malty teas, plays a major role in tea tourism development with its vast estates and heritage tea gardens <sup>23</sup>. Some of the most renowned tea plantation regions are highlighted below, showcasing their unique flavors, rich heritage, and contributions to the tea industry.

### 1.2.3 Thai Nguyen: The Heart of Vietnam's Tea Culture and Tourism

In Vietnam, Thai Nguyen tea is renowned for being of superior quality compared to other tea varieties. The area is known as the "Capital of Viet-

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<sup>20</sup> Amnaj Khaokhruamuang, Piyaporn Chueamchaitrakun, and Kazuyoshi Nakakoji, "International Exchanges and Gastronomical Tea Tourism," in *Routledge Handbook of Tea Tourism* (Routledge, 2022), 247–58, <https://api.taylorfrancis.com/content/chapters/edit/download?identifierName=doi&identifierValue=10.4324/9781003197041-30&type=chapterpdf>.

<sup>21</sup> Jing Luo, *Over a Cup of Tea: An Introduction to Chinese Life and Culture* (University Press of America, 2004), [https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=QESTbCP0Kz0C&oi=fnd&pg=PP7&dq=Culture+in+a+Cup.+Chinese+Tea+Heritage+and+Tourism&ots=a0BFS1zX6p&sig=ogCxa\\_yRZoyF1L19q9-\\_ouW79c](https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=QESTbCP0Kz0C&oi=fnd&pg=PP7&dq=Culture+in+a+Cup.+Chinese+Tea+Heritage+and+Tourism&ots=a0BFS1zX6p&sig=ogCxa_yRZoyF1L19q9-_ouW79c).

<sup>22</sup> Hartwig Bohne, "Uniqueness of Tea Traditions and Impacts on Tourism: The East Frisian Tea Culture," *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research* 15, no. 3 (2021): 371–83, <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/ijcthr-08-2020-0189/full/html>.

<sup>23</sup> Yılmaz and Kumar Dixit, "Analyzing Tea Tourism Products and Experiences from India and Turkey."

namese Tea” since it has been cultivating tea for more than a century<sup>24</sup>. High-quality tea is produced in the area's tea gardens, especially those along the Cong River's alluvial plain. This characteristic has turned into an important attraction for tourists who want to sample its unique flavours and farming methods<sup>25</sup>. The four main stages of Thai Nguyen's tea cultivation history are emergence, interruption, restoration, and prosperity. Today, the region is actively promoting green tea and growing its tea tourist industry, receiving international recognition among tea experts, with strong support from the government and local enterprises<sup>26</sup>. Since 89% of Vietnam's tea can be consumed domestically, Thai Nguyen made a substantial contribution to the country's 50,000 tonnes of green tea production in 2010<sup>27</sup>. The tea culture in Thai Nguyen is integral to local identity and tourism development<sup>28</sup>.

### 1.2.4 East Frisian Tea Culture: Tradition, Identity, and Tourism

Initially, people preferred tea over coffee or beer because it was cheaper, masked poor water quality, and provided needed calories through sugar and cream. Introduced by Dutch merchants, black tea was first enjoyed by Frisia's royal household before becoming a staple among workers. Over time, it evolved into a cultural identity, promoting Frisia as a “tea-drinking region” rather than an underdeveloped area<sup>29</sup>. The East Frisian tea is traditionally served in the iconic “Dresmer Red” porcelain, enriched with

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<sup>24</sup> Thi Ngoc Dung Nguyen, “The Role of Local Communities in Community-Based Tourism Development in Traditional Tea Production Areas in Thai Nguyen Province, Vietnam” (PhD Thesis, The University of Waikato, 2019), <https://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/bitstream/10289/13109/4/thesis.pdf>.

<sup>25</sup> Hoang Huu Chien et al., “Soil Physicochemical Properties in a High-Quality Tea Production Area of Thai Nguyen Province in Northern Region, Vietnam,” *Soil Science and Plant Nutrition* 65, no. 1 (January 2, 2019): 73–81, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00380768.2018.1539310>.

<sup>26</sup> Yanling Guo and Montira Rato, “The Development of Tea Planting and Tea Culture Tourism in Thai Nguyen, Vietnam,” *Journal of Mekong Societies* 15, no. 3 (2019): 121–36, <https://so03.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/mekongjournal/article/view/224840>.

<sup>27</sup> Thi Minh Luyen Dang et al., “Comparison of Sensory Characteristics of Green Tea in Thai Nguyen and Phu Tho, Vietnam,” in *13th Asean Food Conference 2013: Meeting Future Food Demands: Security and Sustainability*, 2013, <https://orbi.uliege.be/handle/2268/156762>.

<sup>28</sup> Nguyen, “The Role of Local Communities in Community-Based Tourism Development in Traditional Tea Production Areas in Thai Nguyen Province, Vietnam.”

<sup>29</sup> Bohne, “Uniqueness of Tea Traditions and Impacts on Tourism.”

cream and rock candy <sup>30</sup>. This tradition, associated with warmth and relaxation, also attracted tourists. Elegant tableware further emphasized the significance and prestige of this tea-drinking custom <sup>31</sup>.

### 1.2.5 Matcha: Japan's Timeless Green Elixir

Japanese matcha is a traditionally grown powdered green tea, with shading during growth enhancing the synthesis of biologically active compounds like theanine, caffeine, chlorophyll, and catechins <sup>32</sup>. Matcha is a finely powdered, unfermented green tea made from shade-grown young tea shoots. After harvest, the leaves undergo steaming, drying, and fine stone milling, ensuring all leaf parts are consumed. Rich in polyphenols, caffeine, and chlorophyll, matcha is valued for its health benefits. Growing interest in its nutritional composition has led to its rising use in the functional food industry <sup>33</sup>. Matcha tea leaves are fully consumed, unlike other teas. Grown in mild, shaded conditions, *Camellia sinensis* plants are 90% shaded for three to four weeks before harvest, extending the maturing period and enhancing quality <sup>34</sup>.

### 1.2.6 Pu-erh Tea: The Art of Fermentation and Flavor

Pu-erh tea is a widely popular post-fermented beverage known for its rich aroma and refreshing taste. Its color ranges from reddish to brownish red, with a full-bodied flavor that varies based on climate and cultural practices<sup>35</sup>. The unique characteristics of Pu-erh tea arise from microbial ferment-

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<sup>30</sup> Lysbeth Vink, Annette Kappert, and Hartwig Bohne, "Cultural Heritage and Tourism: Friesland Tea," in *Routledge Handbook of Tea Tourism* (Routledge, 2022), 58–66, <https://api.taylorfrancis.com/content/chapters/edit/download?identifierName=doi&identifierValue=10.4324/9781003197041-8&type=chapterpdf>.

<sup>31</sup> Hartwig Bohne, ed., *Tea Cultures of Europe: Heritage and Hospitality: Arts & Venues | Teaware & Samovars | Culinary & Ceremonies* (De Gruyter, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110758573>.

<sup>32</sup> Joanna Kochman et al., "Health Benefits and Chemical Composition of Matcha Green Tea: A Review," *Molecules* 26, no. 1 (2020): 85, <https://www.mdpi.com/1420-3049/26/1/85>.

<sup>33</sup> Koláčková et al., "Matcha Tea."

<sup>34</sup> Christina Dietz, Matthijs Dekker, and Betina Piqueras-Fiszman, "An Intervention Study on the Effect of Matcha Tea, in Drink and Snack Bar Formats, on Mood and Cognitive Performance," *Food Research International* 99 (2017): 72–83, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0963996917301941>.

<sup>35</sup> Hai-peng Lv et al., "Processing and Chemical Constituents of Pu-Erh Tea: A Review," *Food Research International* 53, no. 2 (2013): 608–18,

tation, which causes significant chemical changes in the tea leaves<sup>36</sup>. Unlike black tea, Pu-erh tea undergoes a unique process. Fresh leaves are heat-fixed in a drum to deactivate polyphenol oxidases, then rolled and partially dried<sup>37</sup>. It is a type of Microbial fermented tea which undergoes a natural fermentation process, enhancing its flavor complexity and creating unique sensory attributes. This fermentation enriches the tea with probiotics, antioxidants, and bioactive compounds, offering numerous health benefits. The aging process deepens its taste, resulting in rich, earthy, and mellow flavors<sup>38</sup>.

### **1.2.7 Ceylon Tea: A Blend of Tradition, Sustainability, and Tourism**

The Ceylon tea industry grew rapidly after its introduction in the late 1800s. With the refinement of the “two leaves and a bud” plucking method, Sri Lanka's tea production expanded, making it the world's largest tea exporter by 1965<sup>39</sup>. Ceylon tea was introduced in 1824 with plants brought from China and later from India<sup>40</sup>. The tea industry utilizes both manual pruning and mechanized production methods to enhance efficiency and quality. The introduction of the tea leaf roller revolutionized processing by streamlining the rolling stage, ensuring uniformity in tea leaves. This mechanized approach not only improves productivity but also helps main-

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<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0963996913001488>.

<sup>36</sup> Lai Kuan Lee and Keng Yuen Foo, “Recent Advances on the Beneficial Use and Health Implications of Pu-Erh Tea,” *Food Research International* 53, no. 2 (2013): 619–28, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0963996913001415>.

<sup>37</sup> Yuerong Liang, Lingyun Zhang, and Jianliang Lu, “A Study on Chemical Estimation of Pu-erh Tea Quality,” *Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture* 85, no. 3 (February 2005): 381–90, <https://doi.org/10.1002/jsfa.1857>.

<sup>38</sup> Jingchuan Zheng et al., “Enhanced Fermentation of Pu-Erh Tea with *Aspergillus Niger*: Quality and Microbial Community Analysis,” *Molecules* 29, no. 23 (2024): 5647, <https://www.mdpi.com/1420-3049/29/23/5647>.

<sup>39</sup> Wasanee Tharanga Ranasinghe, Park Thaichon, and Malanee Ranasinghe, “An Analysis of Product-Place Co-Branding: The Case of Ceylon Tea,” *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics* 29, no. 1 (2017): 200–214, <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/APJML-10-2015-0156/full/html>.

<sup>40</sup> A.L. Sandika, “Tea Cultivation in Sri Lanka as a Legacy of the British Colonization: Impacts and Trends,” *Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Review* 3, no. 1 (March 1, 2018): 65–70, <https://doi.org/10.4038/jsshr.v3i1.7>.

tain the distinct flavors and textures of the tea <sup>41</sup>. Ceylon tea is packed with antioxidants that support heart health and may help lower the risk of chronic diseases <sup>42</sup>. Tea estates are valued as cultural landscapes, showcasing the historical and modern importance of tea cultivation <sup>43</sup>. There are six major tea producing regions, they are Dimbula, Galle, Kandy, Nuwara Eliya, Ratnapura, and Uva are in Sri Lanka. Each region is known for its distinct tea characteristics influenced by altitude, climate, and soil conditions <sup>44</sup>. Tea tourism provides a sustainable income for local communities, especially in Sri Lanka, where tea estates offer immersive experiences educating visitors about tea production <sup>45</sup>. Introduced by the British in the 1820s, India's tea industry is the world's second-largest, focusing on organic practices. It plays a vital economic role, offers health benefits, and holds cultural significance, with tea tourism further enriching its legacy <sup>46</sup>.

### 1.2.8 Assam and Darjeeling: The Twin Pillars of Indian Tea Tourism

Tea tourism in India, especially in Assam, draws both domestic and foreign visitors with its peaceful tea garden settings <sup>47</sup>. British explorers

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<sup>41</sup> Chandana Shrinath Wijetunga and Jong Sang Sung, "Valuing the Cultural Landscapes Past and Present: Tea Plantations in Sri Lanka," *Landscape Research* 40, no. 6 (August 18, 2015): 668–83, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01426397.2015.1057803>.

<sup>42</sup> Sanath Sameera Wijesinghe Wijesinghe Arachchilage, "The Protection of Geographical Indications in Developing Countries: The Case of Ceylon Tea," *BALANCE (A Bricolage for Legal Augmentation to Navigate Comprehensive Experimentation) International Multidisciplinary Law Journal* 1, no. 1 (2015): 7–25, <https://eprints.qut.edu.au/120298/>.

<sup>43</sup> Laura C. Martin, *Tea: The Drink That Changed the World* (Tuttle Publishing, 2011), <https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=3vXPagAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA1&dq=Tea:+The+Drink+That+Changed+the+World&ots=n0VosEWkk9&sig=Mhx4vUBsdI5IINTDPQ1xiU3ldBA>.

<sup>44</sup> Lee Jolliffe and Mohamed S.M. Aslam, "Tea Heritage Tourism: Evidence from Sri Lanka," *Journal of Heritage Tourism* 4, no. 4 (November 2009): 331–44, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17438730903186607>.

<sup>45</sup> H. H. S. P. Sewwandi, "Tea Tourism Landscape Development through a Sustainable Alternative Livelihood Approach: A Case Study of Pedro Tea Estate, Nuwara Eliya, Sri Lanka," *FARU Journal* 11, no. 1 (October 18, 2024): 1–9, <https://doi.org/10.4038/faruj.v11i1.309>.

<sup>46</sup> Adit Vinod Nair et al., "Study on the Tea Market in India" (arXiv, April 16, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2304.07851>.

<sup>47</sup> Mriganka Saikia, "A Study on Problems and Prospects of Tourism in Assam," *International Journal of Research in Social Sciences* 10, no. 2 (2020): 198–204,

Robert and Charles Bruce made the initial discovery of tea in Assam in 1823, and it has since grown to be the mainstay of the state's economy. With almost 1,000 green tea estates complimenting its environment, Assam alone accounts for more than 50% of India's total tea production<sup>48</sup>. Assam is home to more than 800 major tea estates, making it one of the world's largest tea-producing regions. These estates contribute significantly to the local economy and global tea industry. They also attract tourists seeking to experience Assam's rich tea heritage and lush plantations<sup>49</sup>. It integrates authentic experiences and cultural significance, influencing tourists' intentions to visit and contributing to sustainable growth in the tourism sector<sup>50</sup>. These estates are able to draw tourists looking for an immersive tea experience because of their well-kept roads and contemporary lodging. Assam's untapped potential for tea tourism can be realised with the help of efficient collaboration with tea garden management<sup>51</sup>. And one more notable destination is Darjeeling, a famous tea-growing region in India, is known for producing a distinctive and high-quality tea variety. Produces a variety of teas, including black and green tea<sup>52</sup>. Darjeeling tea plants endure diverse climatic conditions, including low temperatures, winter fog, high humidity, and low solar radiation. Photosynthesis depends on suitable temperatures, increasing with warmth until it peaks before declining. These unique environmental factors contribute

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<https://www.indianjournals.com/ijor.aspx?target=ijor:ijrss&volume=10&issue=2&article=021>.

<sup>48</sup> Surjya Chutia, "Prospects and Problems of Tourism Industry in Assam," *International Journal of Innovative Research in Science [Internet]*, 2015, <https://www.academia.edu/download/87631366/prospects-and-problems-of-tourism-industryin-assam.pdf>.

<sup>49</sup> Chandan Jyoti Bezborah, "Tea Tourism, the Way Forward to Promote Agritourism in the State of Assam: Prospects And Challenges," *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Trends* 5, no. 9 (2023): 1–4, [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Chandan-Bezborah/publication/374757806\\_Tea\\_tourism\\_the\\_way\\_forward\\_to\\_promote\\_agritourism\\_in\\_the\\_state\\_of\\_Assam\\_prospects\\_and\\_challenges/links/652c75780ebf091c48fa7a83/Tea-tourism-the-way-forward-to-promote-agritourism-in-the-state-of-Assam-prospects-and-challenges.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Chandan-Bezborah/publication/374757806_Tea_tourism_the_way_forward_to_promote_agritourism_in_the_state_of_Assam_prospects_and_challenges/links/652c75780ebf091c48fa7a83/Tea-tourism-the-way-forward-to-promote-agritourism-in-the-state-of-Assam-prospects-and-challenges.pdf).

<sup>50</sup> Dutta et al., "Examining Tourists' Intentions to Participate in Tea Tourism. An Emerging Market Context."

<sup>51</sup> Banerjee and Tyagi, "Exploring the Booming Tea Tourist Industry and Unconventional Tourism through the Ritual of Drinking Tea in India."

<sup>52</sup> Pramod Kumar et al., "Tea Industry in India: Problems and Prospects," *Indian Journal of Agricultural Economics* 63, no. 1 (2008), <https://ageconsearch.umn.edu/record/204564/files/10-Pramod.pdf>.

to the distinct quality of Darjeeling tea <sup>53</sup>. Nestled in the Indian Himalayas, Darjeeling's high-altitude plantations, cool climate, and seasonal variations create its unique flavor. These factors give Darjeeling tea its renowned quality, earning it the title "Champagne of Teas."<sup>54</sup>.

### 1.2.9 Empowering Communities through Sustainable Tea Tourism

Tea tourism creates jobs in tea estates, homestays, and local businesses, offering direct employment opportunities for local communities <sup>55</sup>. By actively involving the community in tea tourism, reliable revenue is produced, poverty is decreased, and living standards are raised. Increased visitor participation benefits local workers, agriculture, and artists, generating a variety of income streams. Employability is improved by skill development programs including those in hospitality, guided tours, and tea processing. Better employment opportunities and long-term economic viability for rural towns follow from this <sup>56</sup>. It also encourages cultural preservation by showcasing traditional tea-making practices. Additionally, it promotes environmental protection through sustainable farming, eco-friendly tourism initiatives, and conservation efforts <sup>57</sup>.

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<sup>53</sup> Anil Kumar Singh et al., "Tea Research for Darjeeling Tea Industry-Variou Aspects," *Tea Technological Initiatives*, 2016, 195–239, [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Anil-Singh-9/publication/311613611\\_Tea\\_Research\\_for\\_Darjeeling\\_Tea\\_Industry\\_Variou\\_Aspects/links/5f3a9064458515b729278ae3/Tea-Research-for-Darjeeling-Tea-Industry-Variou-Aspects.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Anil-Singh-9/publication/311613611_Tea_Research_for_Darjeeling_Tea_Industry_Variou_Aspects/links/5f3a9064458515b729278ae3/Tea-Research-for-Darjeeling-Tea-Industry-Variou-Aspects.pdf).

<sup>54</sup> Kasturi Das, "International Protection of India's Geographical Indications with Special Reference to 'Darjeeling' Tea," *The Journal of World Intellectual Property* 9, no. 5 (September 2006): 459–95, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1422-2213.2006.00300.x>.

<sup>55</sup> Shuvasree Banerjee, "Prospects of Tea Tourism in India: Tea Culture With Its Influence Towards Tourists Along With the Destination," in *Inclusive Community Development Through Tourism and Hospitality Practices* (IGI Global, 2023), 160–84, <https://www.igi-global.com/chapter/prospects-of-tea-tourism-in-india/322424>.

<sup>56</sup> Palaniyandi Ashokkumar and C. P. Sangeetha, "Empowering Tea Tourism through Community Participation: A Conceptual Study," accessed March 11, 2025, <https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/r3wmv>.

<sup>57</sup> Imali Fernando, KWSN Kumari, and RMPDK Rajapaksha, "Destination Marketing to Promote Tea Tourism Socio-Economic Approach on Community Development," *PIN Fernando, KWSN Kumari and RMPDK Rajapaksha, Destination Marketing to Promote Tea Tourism: Socio-Economic Approach on Community Development, International Review of Management and Business Research*, (2017) 6, no. 1 (2017): 68–75, [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=3877264](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3877264).

### 1.2.10 Preserving Heritage and Culture through Tea Tourism

Tea has deep historical and cultural significance, often linked to traditional ceremonies, rituals, and social gatherings across various regions. Integrating creative activities like tea-tasting sessions, storytelling, and cultural performances enriches the visitor experience. These initiatives help preserve and promote the heritage of tea tourism, making it more immersive and educational <sup>58</sup>. For example, the heritage bungalows in Assam showcase British colonial architectural styles, offering visitors a glimpse into the region's colonial past. Similarly, the tea tribes in Assam represent a rich cultural blend, combining Assamese traditions with influences from various indigenous communities <sup>59</sup>. Traditional Chinese tea processing, recognized as an intangible cultural heritage, reflects centuries-old craftsmanship and rituals passed down through generations. Tourism plays a crucial role in preserving this cultural identity by promoting tea ceremonies, plantation visits, and artisan-led workshops. Additionally, sustainable tea tourism supports ecosystem services by encouraging organic farming, biodiversity conservation, and responsible land management practices <sup>60</sup>.

### 1.2.11 Tea Tourism: Fostering Sustainability through Responsible Travel

Tea tourism promotes sustainable practices to protect the environment and support local communities. Many tea estates focus on eco-friendly methods like organic farming, reducing waste, and conserving water. These efforts help maintain the natural beauty of tea-growing regions while ensuring long-term benefits for both farmers and tourists. Encouraging responsible tourism fosters a deeper connection between visitors and the environment <sup>61</sup>. When local communities actively participate in tea tourism, they help implement eco-friendly practices like waste management and sustainable farming. Their involvement ensures that tourism grows

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<sup>58</sup> Lee Jolliffe et al., “Creative Tea Tourism in Asian Tea Villages,” *Food, Culture & Society*, February 15, 2024, 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15528014.2024.2315712>.

<sup>59</sup> Hazarika et al., “Tea Tourism,” 2024.

<sup>60</sup> Lingbo Fu, Chengyu Xiong, and Min Xu, “Influential Factors Affecting Tea Tourists’ Behavior Intention in Cultural Ecosystem Services: An Affordance Perspective,” *Sustainability* 15, no. 21 (2023): 15503, <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/15/21/15503>.

<sup>61</sup> Sewwandi, “Tea Tourism Landscape Development through a Sustainable Alternative Livelihood Approach,” October 18, 2024.

responsibly while protecting the natural environment<sup>62</sup>. Avitourism, or bird-watching tourism, enhances the appeal of tea plantations by attracting nature lovers and wildlife enthusiasts. Many tea estates are home to diverse bird species, creating a unique experience for visitors. By integrating avitourism, tea plantations can offer guided bird-watching tours alongside traditional tea experiences. This not only increases tourist interest but also promotes environmental conservation and eco-tourism initiatives<sup>63</sup>. Tea tourism blends the natural beauty of tea plantations with visitor experiences, creating a harmonious connection between agriculture and tourism. Lush green tea estates, rich biodiversity, and scenic landscapes attract nature lovers and eco-tourists. This integration promotes sustainable tourism while preserving the ecological balance of tea-growing regions<sup>64</sup>.

### 1.2.12 Tea Gardens: Where Nature, Culture, and Heritage Unite

Tea gardens are not just farmlands; they are living stories of generations who have nurtured them with dedication and care. These lush landscapes showcase traditional agricultural techniques passed down over time, preserving a way of life deeply connected to nature. Beyond cultivation, they serve as the heart of local communities, where families work, celebrate, and share their heritage with the world<sup>65</sup>. Tea tourists explore tea gardens each year, spending anywhere from 2 to 8 hours experiencing the beauty and process of tea cultivation. These gardens offer a unique tourism environment, blending nature, culture, and heritage. They provide an immersive setting where visitors can engage with the landscape, traditions, and local communities.<sup>66</sup> Tea gardens attract tourists seeking picturesque landscapes and immersive experiences, from tea tasting to guided planta-

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<sup>62</sup> Kyoko Ishigami and Amnaj Khaokhruamuang, “Tea Tourism Promotion in Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems,” in *Routledge Handbook of Tea Tourism* (Routledge, 2022), 269–76, <https://api.taylorfrancis.com/content/chapters/edit/download?identifierName=doi&identifierValue=10.4324/9781003197041-32&type=chapterpdf>.

<sup>63</sup> Siew Imm Ng et al., “Time for Tea: Factors of Service Quality, Memorable Tourism Experience and Loyalty in Sustainable Tea Tourism Destination,” *Sustainability* 14, no. 21 (2022): 14327, <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/14/21/14327>.

<sup>64</sup> Xiong, “A Study on Tea Culture Tourism Development in Jiangxi Province.”

<sup>65</sup> Bezborah, “Tea Tourism, the Way Forward to Promote Agritourism in the State of Assam.”

<sup>66</sup> Lingbo Fu, Chengyu Xiong, and Min Xu, “Influential Factors Affecting Tea Tourists’ Behavior Intention in Cultural Ecosystem Services: An Affordance Perspective,” *Sustainability* 15, no. 21 (2023): 15503, <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/15/21/15503>.

tion walks. These lush estates serve as prime locations for photography, capturing the beauty of rolling green hills. As a major highlight of tea tourism, they offer visitors a deeper connection to tea culture and heritage<sup>67</sup>. Tea gardens now offer charming homestays, allowing visitors to experience local hospitality and scenic surroundings. To enhance tourist experiences, various amenities such as guided tours, tea-tasting sessions, and cultural programs are being developed. These initiatives aim to make tea tourism more immersive and appealing to travellers<sup>68</sup>. Tea tourism is often combined with forest-based tourism, offering visitors a blend of nature and culture. Activities like tea picking, hiking through lush plantations, and exploring nearby forests enhance the experience. This fusion allows tourists to enjoy both the heritage of tea cultivation and the beauty of natural landscapes<sup>69</sup>.

### 1.2.13 Challenges in Tea Tourism: From Economic Struggles to Sustainable Solutions

The gap between policy and real-world implementation limits women's participation in various sectors. A lack of awareness and insufficient training further restrict their opportunities for growth. Addressing these barriers is essential to ensuring equal access and empowerment<sup>70</sup>. Tourism integration concepts have not had a strong impact on tea farming communities, making it harder for farmers to benefit. Many farmers hesitate to participate because they face challenges like financial risks and unfamiliar tourism processes. Without proper support and guidance, they may find it difficult to merge tea production with tourism activities<sup>71</sup>. Farmers and tea estate owners have minimal contact with travel agents, making it harder to

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<sup>67</sup> Yılmaz and Kumar Dixit, "Analyzing Tea Tourism Products and Experiences from India and Turkey."

<sup>68</sup> Chutia, "Prospects and Problems of Tourism Industry in Assam."

<sup>69</sup> Masako Saito, "Revitalising a Region Using Tea Tourism: The Case of Umegashima, Japan," in *Routledge Handbook of Tea Tourism* (Routledge, 2022), 205–13, <https://api.taylorfrancis.com/content/chapters/edit/download?identifierName=doi&identifierValue=10.4324/9781003197041-25&type=chapterpdf>.

<sup>70</sup> QU11 Mingjing, "Barriers and Opportunities for Women in Tea Tourism: A Qualitative Examination of Policy Context in Yaoqu Township, China," *Jurnalul Practicilor Comunitare Pozitive* 23, no. 3 (2023): 67–82, <https://www.cceol.com/search/article-detail?id=1193476>.

<sup>71</sup> Mei Fang and Man Zhu, "Analysis of the Influencing Factors of Farmers's Willingness to Participate in the Integration of Tea and Tourism" An Empirical Study of Tea Farmers in Emeishan City," *Journal of Agricultural Science* 16, no. 6 (2024): 1–81, <https://ideas.repec.org/a/ibn/jasjnl/v16y2024i6p81.html>.

promote tea tourism. This lack of connection limits their ability to attract visitors and grow their business<sup>72</sup>. There are not enough service providers to organize and manage tea tours, making it difficult for visitors to explore tea estates. Additionally, the shortage of trained staff in tea-related hospitality and guiding affects the overall tourist experience<sup>73</sup>. The decline in tea leaf prices is reducing the earnings of farmers, making it harder for them to sustain their livelihoods. Many struggle to cover production costs and maintain their plantations due to lower profits<sup>74</sup>. Tea tourism faces a challenge in maintaining authentic traditions while also meeting commercial demands. Farmers and businesses must adapt to changing economic conditions and tourist preferences without losing the cultural essence of tea heritage<sup>75</sup>. Tea production and tourism generate a large amount of solid waste, including tea leaves, packaging materials, and plastic waste from visitors. Poor waste management systems make it difficult to handle this waste properly, leading to pollution. Many tea estates and tourist spots lack efficient recycling and disposal methods. As a result, waste accumulates, harming the environment and nearby communities. Improving waste management practices is essential for sustainable tea tourism<sup>76</sup>. Traditional tea and tourism industries face challenges like changing market demands, low profits, and lack of innovation. Many tea estates struggle to attract visitors beyond basic plantation tours. To make tea tourism more appealing, creative activities like interactive tea-making sessions, cultural performances, and eco-friendly experiences are needed<sup>77</sup>.

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<sup>72</sup> Yılmaz and Kumar Dixit, “Analyzing Tea Tourism Products and Experiences from India and Turkey.”

<sup>73</sup> Gulsun Yildirim, “GASTRONOMY AND TEA TOURISM,” *Routledge Handbook of Tea Tourism*, 2022, <https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=McyUEAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PT327&dq=Gastronomy+and+Tea+Tourism&ots=qkqhDf1ZX9&sig=tmfGad00b2Lua2YAt4UO3zSpRuE>.

<sup>74</sup> Saito, “Revitalising a Region Using Tea Tourism.”

<sup>75</sup> Gary Sigley, “Tea Tourism and Route Heritage: Nakeli Village on China’s Ancient Tea Horse Road,” in *Routledge Handbook of Tea Tourism* (Routledge, 2022), 23–30, <https://api.taylorfrancis.com/content/chapters/edit/download?identifierName=doi&identifierValue=10.4324/9781003197041-4&type=chapterpdf>.

<sup>76</sup> Banerjee and Tyagi, “Tea Destinations of India and Sustainable Solid Waste Management.”

<sup>77</sup> Jolliffe et al., “Creative Tea Tourism in Asian Tea Villages.”

### 1.3 Conclusion

Tea tourism is a unique and eco-friendly form of travel that allows visitors to explore tea-growing regions, learn about tea production, and experience local culture. It benefits local communities, encourages environmental preservation, and boosts the economy. Visitors engage in activities including collecting and brewing various teas, as well as visiting tea gardens, factories, and museums. This form of tourism creates jobs, strengthens rural economies, and helps in improving infrastructure, education, and healthcare in tea-producing areas. Tea tourism has its roots in imperial China, when experts visited tea regions to improve their sense of flavour. Tea culture gradually expanded throughout the world, impacting customs in nations like India and England. In the 19th century, the British brought tea production to India, which led to the fame of tea-producing areas like Assam and Darjeeling. Through engaging events like leaf harvesting and tea ceremony participation, tea tourism also introduces visitors to the rich history of tea. It improves local identity and promotes cross-cultural interaction. Tea tourism guarantees a balance between revenue generation and cultural preservation by using sustainable methods. In many parts of the world, tea plays a significant role in both culture and tourism. Every location has its own distinct tea-growing customs, practices, and tourism value. Vietnam's Thai Nguyen region is renowned for producing high-quality tea. With government assistance, the area, which has a long history of growing tea, is currently promoting tea tourism. East Frisian Tea Culture in Germany developed as a daily staple due to its affordability. Over time, it became a cultural symbol, attracting visitors with its traditional tea-serving customs. Matcha from Japan is a finely powdered green tea with high nutritional value. It is grown in shaded conditions to enhance its quality and is widely used in the health and functional food industry. Puerh Tea from China is famous for its fermentation process, which improves its flavor and health benefits. The aging process enhances its rich, earthy taste, making it unique among teas. Ceylon Tea from Sri Lanka is a major part of the country's economy and culture. It is produced in six major regions, each with distinct characteristics. Tea tourism in Sri Lanka offers visitors immersive experiences in tea estates. In India, Assam and Darjeeling are the two most significant tea-producing regions. Assam has vast tea estates, contributing to the economy and attracting tourists. Darjeeling's high-altitude plantations produce a unique tea known as the "Champagne of Teas." Tea tourism is a powerful tool for community development, heritage preservation, and sustainable travel. By actively involving local communities, it creates job opportunities, reduces poverty,

and improves living standards. Skill development in areas like hospitality and tea processing helps residents find better employment. This ensures long-term economic growth for rural tea-growing regions. Cultural heritage is an important part of tea tourism. Traditional tea-making practices, historical tea estates, and cultural performances enrich the tourist experience while preserving local traditions. Examples like Assam's colonial bungalows and China's tea ceremonies highlight how tea tourism connects people to history. In tea tourism, sustainability is crucial. To preserve the environment, many tea estates use eco-friendly cultivation practices, waste minimisation, and biodiversity preservation. Responsible tourism helps maintain the natural beauty of tea plantations while supporting farmers. Activities like bird-watching add to the appeal of tea estates, encouraging eco-conscious travel. Tea gardens serve as more than agricultural spaces they are centers of culture, tradition, and community life. Visitors enjoy scenic landscapes, guided tours, tea tastings, and homestays that provide a deeper connection to tea culture. Many estates also integrate forest tourism, offering activities like hiking and tea picking to enhance the experience. Despite its benefits, tea tourism faces several challenges. Many farmers lack awareness and training, making it difficult for them to integrate tourism into their businesses. Its expansion is further limited by a lack of skilled personnel and weak linkages with travel agents. Economic struggles, such as declining tea prices making it harder to sustain both tea production and tourism. Additionally, waste management remains a major issue, with estates struggling to handle plastic and tea waste effectively. To overcome these challenges, tea tourism must focus on better training programs, stronger partnerships with travel agencies, and sustainable waste management. Introducing interactive experiences like hands-on tea-making and cultural events can attract more visitors. By addressing these challenges, tea tourism can continue to thrive, benefiting local communities while preserving heritage and the environment.

## **Biographical Sketch of authors**

### **1. Biographical Sketch- Mahalakshmi R**

Mahalakshmi R is a dedicated research scholar at the Central University of Tamil Nadu's Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management. with a keen interest in exploring the diverse and dynamic fields of tourism and hospitality and a focus on understanding the intricate patterns of work-life balance among industry employees, committed to uncovering the challenges and motivations that drive these sectors.

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Dr. P. Raja , Assistant Professor at the Central University of Tamil Nadu, is an expert in hotel management ,HR research and pilgrimage tourism. With over 10 years of experience in teaching and the hospitality industry, his research focuses on quality of work life of employees, advanced technology adoption, and worked as a consultant for a large restaurant chain completed over 25 restaurant operational projects in India and abroad.

## 3. Biographical Sketch- Arun murugan E

Arun Murugan E is a research scholar at the Central University of Tamil Nadu's Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management. His research focusses on the effects of tourism on local economies, culture, and society. Arun is committed to investigating the subtleties of tourist management and its impact on cultural practices.

## CHAPTER 2

# ROLE AND RELEVANCE OF SUSTAINABLE TEA TOURISM IN DEVELOPMENT OF NATURE-BASED HEALTH TOURISM IN INDIA – A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY

DR. ARUNESH PARASHAR  
AND PRACHI AGARWAL

### 1 Introduction

Tourism an act of travelling, where tea tourism is still a developing industry. India's tourism sector has experienced remarkable growth, attracting both domestic and international visitors. This growth is fueled by the country's diverse offerings, including historical monuments, cultural experiences, and natural landscapes. Nature-based tourism, in particular, has gained popularity, drawing visitors to India's national parks and protected areas. However, the increasing number of tourists also presents challenges related to environmental conservation and the well-being of local communities. Tea, the most one of the popular beverage worldwide, which is enjoyed at broad spectrum<sup>1</sup>. First choice of tourist to any destination, where beverages like tea and coffee are considered as source to spend anytime and at anywhere. Even destinations are also using these to broaden their market and income. And if just travelling for tea purpose only can be a niche/ special interest tourism market. Such place based food/beverage attractions stimulates destination network and contributes to the association of food products with destination identity sustainably. Tea, is deeply embedded in Indian culture and known for its health benefits,

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<sup>1</sup> Huang, L. (2024). Research on Regional Tea Tourism Product Development Strategy Combined with RMP Analysis. *Applied Mathematics and Nonlinear Sciences*, 9(1). <https://doi.org/10.2478/amns-2024-0576>

can serve as a focal point for attracting tourists interested in both nature and well-being<sup>2</sup>. India, with its rich biodiversity and ancient traditions of wellness<sup>3</sup>, is uniquely positioned to develop nature-based health tourism and therefore, the chapter explores the intersection of sustainable tea tourism and nature-based health tourism in India, highlighting the potential for synergistic growth and development. Sustainable practices within the tea industry can further enhance the appeal, aligning with the growing global interest in responsible and eco-conscious travel.

## 2 Objectives of the Study

- i. To present tea tourism as a nature- based health tourism practice at tourism destinations.
- ii. To discuss about the various activities and benefits from tea tourism to tourists health.
- iii. To study about various natural elements and resources that will boost sustainable tea tourism

## Section 1

### 1.1 Sustainable Tea Tourism

Sustainable tourism seeks to minimize the negative impacts of tourism while maximizing its positive contributions to environmental protection, economic development, and cultural preservation. It emphasizes responsible travel practices that respect the environment, support local economies, and enhance the well-being of host communities<sup>4</sup>. As awareness of environmental and social issues grows, sustainable tourism is becoming increasingly important for ensuring the long-term viability of the tourism sector. Sustainability incorporated with tea tourism market focuses on visit

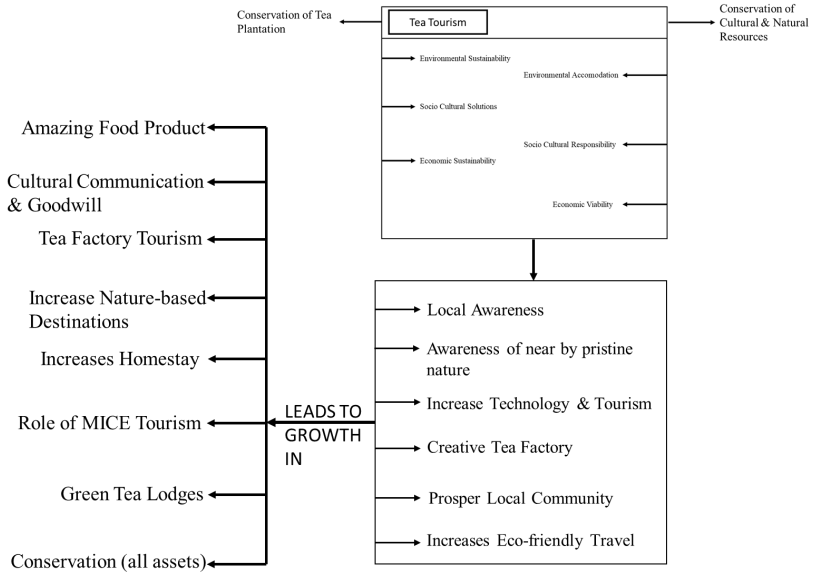
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<sup>2</sup> Ng, S. I., Lim, X., Hall, C. M., Tee, K. K., Basha, N. K., Ibrahim, W. S. N. B., & Koupaei, S. N. (2022). Time for Tea: Factors of service quality, memorable tourism experience and loyalty in sustainable tea tourism destination. *Sustainability*, 14(21), 14327. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su142114327>.

<sup>3</sup> Banerjee, S., & Tyagi, P. K. (2024). Exploring the booming tea tourist industry and unconventional tourism through the ritual of drinking tea in India. *Journal of Ethnic Foods*, 11(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s42779-023-00215-1>

<sup>4</sup> Sita, K., Aji, T. M., & Hanim, W. (2021). Integrating tea and tourism: a potential sustainable livelihood approach for Indonesia tea producer central area. *IOP Conference Series Earth and Environmental Science*, 892(1), 012104. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/892/1/012104>

to tea plantations and factories, offering insights into the cultivation, processing, and cultural significance of tea<sup>5</sup>.



**Fig. 2-1** Framework of Tea Tourism  
 Source: Own Elaboration

Figure 1 presents the framework of tea tourism, emphasizing the conservation of tea plantations and the preservation of cultural and natural resources. It integrates key aspects such as environmental sustainability, eco-friendly accommodations, socio-cultural responsibility, economic sustainability, and viability. This is achieved by raising awareness among both hosts and guests about preserving nature, leveraging technology and the tourism industry, establishing or enhancing tea factories based on location, supporting local communities, and promoting eco-friendly travel<sup>6</sup>. As a result, this approach fosters the growth of sustainable and

<sup>5</sup> Sewwandi, H. H. S. P. (2024). Tea tourism landscape development through a sustainable alternative livelihood approach: a case study of Pedro tea estate, Nuwara Eliya, Sri Lanka. *FARU Journal*, 11(1), 1–9.  
<https://doi.org/10.4038/faruj.v11i1.309>

<sup>6</sup> United Nations. (2023). 17 Goals to Transform Our World. Retrieved from United Nations, SDG Summit 2023: <https://www.un.org/sdgmедiazone?gclid=>

healthy food products, expands nature-based destinations, enhances tea factory tourism, encourages homestays and MICE tourism, and supports green tea lodges while contributing to the conservation of natural resources. Tea has long been recognized for its health benefits, which are attributed to its rich content of antioxidants, polyphenols, and other bioactive compounds. There are several health benefits of Tea. These compounds have been shown to have various health-promoting effects, including:

- Antioxidant Activity: Protecting against oxidative stress and cell damage.
- Anti-inflammatory Properties: Reducing inflammation and supporting immune function.
- Cardiovascular Protection: Lowering blood pressure and cholesterol levels, reducing the risk of heart disease.
- Anti-diabetic Effects: Improving insulin sensitivity and regulating blood sugar levels.
- Anti-obesity Effects: Promoting weight loss and reducing the risk of obesity-related diseases.

## 1.2 Nature-based Health Tourism

Nature-based Health Tourism, is a form of niche travel that allows tourists to travel within nature-based areas for health, relaxation and wellness purposes<sup>7</sup>. Cohen (2003) also states that enhanced health necessitates a holistic integration of various factors that determine physical, psychological, emotional, social, economic, environmental, and spiritual health. It also assumes high levels of physical strength, stamina, mental clarity, physical beauty, and maximum enjoyment and fulfillment from life. To offer visitors a unique experience by prioritizing their well-being, engaging them in diverse activities, and enhancing their knowledge and awareness of sustainable development, environmental conservation, and the human-nature connection. This approach encourages individuals to harmonize with nature while gaining new wellness experiences. Achieving these goals is only possible when tourists visit destinations that embody

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<sup>7</sup> Parashar, A., & Agarwal, P. (2024). *Role and Importance of Nature-Based Health Tourism in the Himalayan Region*. 143–157. <https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-0823-3.ch014>

these principles. This can be accomplished by developing and implementing various models across different locations, utilizing suitable natural resources, climate conditions, temperature, and biodiversity

## Section 2

### 2.1 Tea Tourism and Nature-based Health Tourism (Relevance & Development)

Tea tourism is a specialized form of tourism that focuses on the cultural, historical, and natural aspects of tea production. It involves visiting tea plantations, learning about tea cultivation and processing, participating in tea tasting ceremonies, and experiencing the lifestyle of tea-growing communities<sup>8</sup>. Tea tourism offers a unique opportunity to combine nature-based experiences with cultural immersion, making it an attractive option for travelers seeking authentic and sustainable tourism experiences. India is one of the world's largest tea producers, with a rich history and culture associated with tea cultivation. The tea plantations of Assam, Darjeeling, and other regions are not only important economic centers but also iconic landscapes that attract tourists from around the globe<sup>9</sup>. The British colonial rule played a significant role in establishing tea plantations in the upper Brahmaputra valley, which transformed the region's landscape and culture. The interaction between planters and indigenous Assamese communities has shaped the language, lifestyle, work culture, and socio-cultural practices in these estates. Tea drinking has also become an integral part of Indian culture, with various types of tea consumed across the country. Tea tourism and nature-based health tourism shows a perfect blend of getting culinary and wellness experience together at the same time at same place.

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<sup>8</sup> Cajee, L. (2014). Eco-Cultural tourism: a tool for environmental, cultural and economic sustainability (A case study of Darap Village, West Sikkim). *SHS Web of Conferences*, 12, 01029. <https://doi.org/10.1051/shsconf/20141201029>

<sup>9</sup> Saikia, B., Goswami, H., Assam down town University, & Assam down town University. (2022). An evaluation on the Socio-Cultural life of tea plantation workers in Assam with respect to its historical perspective. *YMER*, 21(9), 887. <https://ymerdigital.com/uploads/YMER2109A4.pdf>