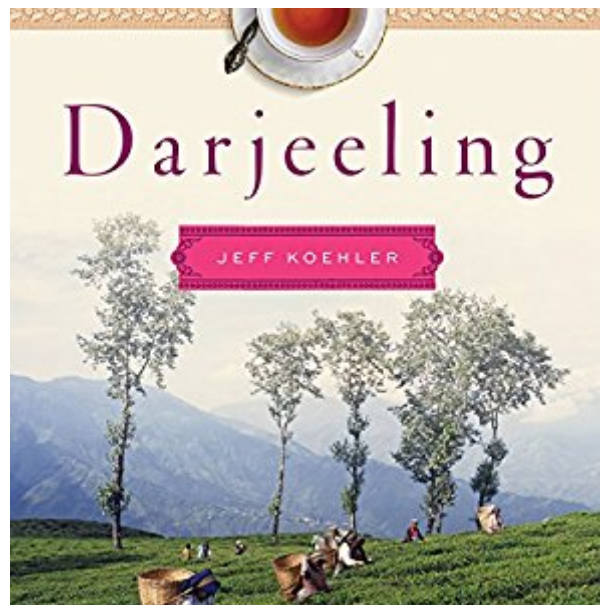




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Darjeeling: The Colorful History And Precarious Fate Of The World's Greatest Tea



Synopsis

Darjeeling's tea bushes run across a mythical landscape steeped with the religious, the sacred, and the picturesque. Planted at high elevation in the heart of the Eastern Himalayas, in an area of Northern India bound by Nepal to the west, Bhutan to the east, and Sikkim to the north, the linear rows of brilliant green, waist-high shrubs that coat the steep slopes and valleys around this Victorian "hill town" produce only a fraction of the world's tea and less than 1 percent of India's total. Yet the tea from that limited crop, with its characteristic bright, amber-colored brew and muscatel flavors - delicate and flowery, hinting of apricots and peaches - is generally considered the best in the world. This is the story of how Darjeeling tea began, was key to the largest tea industry on the globe under imperial British rule, and came to produce the highest-quality tea leaves anywhere in the world. It is a story rich in history, intrigue, and empire, full of adventurers and unlikely successes in culture, mythology and religions, ecology and terroir, all set with a backdrop of the looming Himalayas and drenching monsoons. The story is ripe with the imprint of the raj as well as the contemporary clout of "voodoo farmers" getting world-record prices for their fine teas - and all of it beginning with one of the most audacious acts of corporate smuggling in history. But it is also the story of how the industry spiraled into decline by the end of the 20th century and how this edenic spot in the high Himalayas seethes with union unrest and a violent independence struggle. It is also a front-line fight against the devastating effects of climate change and decades of harming farming practices, a fight that is being fought in some tea gardens - and, astonishingly, won - using radical methods. Jeff Koehler has written a fascinating chronicle of India and its most sought-after tea.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is an outstanding book about tea. Geography, history, politics, growing conditions, processing methods, and on and on. This is the tea book I have been looking for for years. I have marked and dogeared many pages, and will use this as my go-to source for tea information. Absolutely a treasure.

I had heard of Darjeeling teas but did not realize they were considered the best. The journey this story took me created the desire to not only to experience this tea but also to visit and experience the area and it's people.

Excellent book about the history of tea and Darjeeling tea of course. I highly recommend it.

Well written. History and historical impact of tea was unknown to me and very interesting.

I now have much more respect for a simple (really !!) cup of tea. Entertaining and informative.

Great Book on the history of Darjeeling Teas in India! A fascinating read and I learned a great deal.

Interesting read but I just found it too long.

This book is the best introduction on Darjeeling tea. When you finish reading the book you will be knowledgeable about tea estates ,and how Darjeeling is harvested and sorted. Most important for me is information about organic Darjeeling. It is the only kind I will buy.

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