



NELA NELA

Teas for 2024

Artisanal teas from the Caucasus

Your link to Georgian Tea

Order seasonal tea directly from farmers, twice per year

Since we started in 2021, specialising in Georgia's indigenous, rolled and oxidised botanical tisanes - the black tea of the herbal tea world - we've made a lot of deep connections with the tea farmers and foragers of Georgia. Reviving from the post-Soviet crash, they now make some of the most beautiful artisanal teas in the world.

The three founders of Nela-Nela, Tom, Tim and Amy have all lived for several years in rural western Georgia, where tea is grown. We know intimately how tea can be used for wide-reaching social and environmental good in Georgia.

Just as wine drinkers learn about the soil, terroir and growing philosophies of their favourite winemakers and coffee drinkers value traceability to farmers through their trusted roasters, so too do we relish the opportunity to tell our friends and customers about the amazing people who craft these teas.

By placing pre-orders for tea with growers, we provide you with seasonal tea from a range of amazing farmers whose personality comes through in their teas. We ship teas in spring and in autumn for early and late season teas, getting the freshest teas out while keeping the otherwise horrendous shipping costs to a minimum.



Ordering from us —

— or from the growers, via us

When you place an order with us, we will contact the growers and confirm that they can fulfil your required quantity. We will provide an estimated shipping cost and confirm the order with a deposit. In May and November, we will ship all orders from Georgia and arrange a courier to your address. This allows us to offer you a wider selection than we could possibly stock ourselves, so your selection is more likely to be distinct to your brand.

We charge a commission on tea which enables us to keep you connected to growers who are most relevant to your needs, as well as to organise the logistics and paperwork to export your tea.

Alternatively, if you prefer, we can offer farmer-to-delivery open-invoicing for businesses with commitments to direct sourcing; we would charge an equivalent facilitators' fee.

Retail packaging or tea bagging can also be arranged in Georgia for you.

For very large orders of several tons or more we work with a few growers who can fulfil this, still using handpicked leaves and small batch production; please contact us for information and samples if this is of interest.



Our selection for small orders

One of the reasons we love Georgian tea is its incredible diversity. As a result, we offer a selection of teas from a wide range of producers, but there are some we think are exceptional value for money and showcase the terroir of Georgian Tea beautifully.

We facilitate small orders (less than 25 kg) of the following selection of teas. We think they represent some of the best value in their categories and highly recommend them. We offer a wild-harvested option and plantation options where possible.

If you require a different tea in small quantities, let us know as we can probably arrange it.

Black teas

Nargiza's Tippy Black, Samegrelo
£ 97.60 /kg

Tornike's WILD Black, Imereti
£ 100.8 /kg

Green teas

Nargiza's Long-Jin-style Green, Samegrelo
£ 97.60 /kg

Gurian WILD Green tea, Imereti
£ 100.80 /kg

Dato's Green tea, Guria
£ 42.98 /kg

White teas

Guji's WILD White tea,
£ 118 /kg low altitude, Imereti

Tornike's WILD White tea,
£108.50 /kg high altitude, Imereti

Tornike's plantation White Tea "S",
£ 69.32/kg high altitude, Imereti

Tisanes, Herbals and Botanicals

Shota's rolled Vine leaf tisane

Shota's rolled WILD pear leaf tisane
(black tea method)

Shota's rolled WILD white mulberry leaf tisane
(oolong tea method)

Shota's rolled WILD quince leaf tea
All £49.60/kg

Tornike's long leaf rolled
WILD blueberry leaf tisane
(black tea method, traditional mountain tea)
£ 48.80 /kg

Oolong teas

Nargiza's "Emporer's" Red Oolong, Samegrelo
£ 97.60 /kg

Our tea range

Nargiza's Teas: Tsalenjikha



Long-Jin style Green

Flat, vibrant green leaves. Very lightly processed by simultaneous fixation and drying by pressing leaves on a heated pan. The bushes are derived from Chinese varieties, - mostly from Qimen. This adaptation of the method to these leaves and terroir led to this tea winning the Grand Prize of the Georgian Tea Festival 2022.

Fresh, citric flavours. Bright, yellow-green brew.

Tippy Black tea (spring or summer)

Unanimously our favourite black tea in Georgia. Oxidised naturally in wicker baskets in very small batches, this is a culmination of Nargiza's 68 years of teamaking expertise.

Rich, deep black tea. Low in tannic feel with a woody, caramel flavour that just keeps developing. Good for at least three infusions and highly resistant to overbrewing. Lots of silver tips visible in the dry leaves.

Spring and summer teas are very similar, but spring teas are a little more floral and summer tends towards strength.

"Emperor's" Red Oolong:

Very close to a red/black tea, this Oolong is part-fixed by wok frying after a gentle rolling. It is returned to baskets for further oxidation before a second oven fixing and drying.

Rich yellow/red colour, this is like a red tea but with the refreshing sparkle of greenery brightening up the flavour.



All three teas priced at:

Small orders <25kg

£ 92.60 /kg

Other orders 25-250kg

£ 82.35 /kg



Our tea range

Tenieshvili Tea: Classic teas of Guria

White tea

Light green, delicately dried leaves with excellent rebrewing properties and strength of flavour. One leaf and a bud

An excellent expression of the lowland teas of Guria, where mist hangs over the bushes between mountains that shelter the region from the harsher sea air of nearby Adjaran plantations.

Black tea

A classical Georgian tea which exhibits all the virtues of this country's tea. Low in tannic mouthfeel, with warm, biscuity flavours.

Green tea

Much like the black, this is a perfect example of a flavour of Georgia. A classic green - mineral, herbaceous, and glowing.

WILD Green tea

Harvested from rewilding Gurian forest ecosystem under a thick shading canopy, this is our favourite green at the moment.

The long, twisted leaves brew to a rich and complex flavour which develops in the mouth. Highly recommended, but only available in relatively limited quantities.

Wild Blueberry Leaf tisane

Tightly rolled and oxidised young wild blueberry leaves ; a herbal analogue of black tea. More savoury flavour than Tornike's version. Caffeine-free herbal black tisane.



White Tea



Black tea



Wild Green Tea

Order volume	White tea	Black/ Green teas	Wild Green tea	Wild blueberry leaf
Small orders (<25kg)	£ - /kg	£ 42.98 /kg	£ 95.70 /kg	£ - /kg
25-100 kg	£ 105 /kg	£ 35.20 /kg	£ 80.05 /kg	£ 65.25 /kg
100+ kg	£ 90.60 /kg	£ 32.65 /kg	- Contact us -	£ 54.37 /kg

Our tea range

Shota's Tea: Herbals from Lechkhumi

These are specially produced, caffeine free, single ingredient, single origin, wild foraged tisanes. They are rolled and oxidised to make them the black and oolong tea of the herbal world.

WILD White Mulberry Leaf tisane, oolong method.
Roasted hazelnut flavours and warm cocoa aroma, this calming brew has become a bestselling Nela-Nela classic.

WILD Pear Leaf tisane, red tea method.
Rolled and oxidised to a light black tea, but caffeine free. Almond and fruit flavours and a light amber colour.

WILD Apple Leaf tisane, red tea method.
Rich, earthy and lightly tannic. Floral blossom flavour with almondy base notes. Excellent alone or well suited to blending.

WILD Quince Leaf tisane, red tea method.
Similar in style to an oolong, this gentle yellow brew has a good body and silky texture with deep and floral flavours. It is harvested from the downy fresh leaves of spring, rolled and lightly oxidised.

Grape Vine Leaf tisane, red tea method
This is a really special tea: two leaves and a bud from the legendary 'Usakhelauri' grape vines in early spring. This variety grows only in the Khvamli microclimate, so production is limited.

These pearl-rolled leaves resemble a gunpowder green, and the brew is reminiscent: a spicy, acidic green with strong raspberry and orange overtones makes this very moreish.

WILD Acacia flowers
A taste of summer! As you would expect, floral and slightly sweet from acacia nectar. Pale yellow, smooth infusion is delicious alone, or in a blend.



Pear leaf



Apple leaf



Vine leaf



Acacia flower

For all tisanes on this page:
Order quantity Price
0-50 kg £49.60/kg
50-100 kg £45 /kg
> 100 kg £41.85 /kg

Our tea range

Tornike's Tea: High mountain teas of Imereti

WILD white tea

Harvested only once in spring from plantations rewilded over 40 years, these bushes are now deep in a deciduous, native woodland ecosystem. Due to the deep shade where they are grown, have exceptional sweetness and long, vertical leaves. One leaf and a bud picking standard.

The leaves are processed very delicately and a magnificent green colour. They yield a long, developing flavour experience, good for many infusions as a session tea.

Cultivated teas: White, Green and Black

As well as his wild forest-grown teas, Tornike has restored some of the highest plantations in Georgia,

He makes two grades of tea to cover all budgets: a one leaf and a bud grade (F) and two leaves and a bud (S). Two leaves make up and tend to give stronger flavours and can be cheaper as there's more weight for the same amount of work. For delicacy of flavour, a single leaf is often the preferred choice,

	Wild White tea	Wild Black tea	Wild Green tea	Wild blueberry leaf
0-25 kg	£108.50 /kg	£100.8 /kg	£- /kg	£ 48.80 /kg
25-50 kg	£ 98.31 /kg	£ 91.35 /kg	£ 91.35 /kg	£ 36.35 /kg
>50 kg	£ 91.53 /kg	£ 85.05 /kg	£ 85.05 /kg	£ 31.05/kg
	White tea F	White tea S	Black/Green teas F	Black/Green teas S
0-25 kg	£ - /kg	£ 69.32/kg	£ - /kg	£ - /kg
25-50 kg	£ 81.97 /kg	£ 60.80 /kg	£ 85.05 /kg	£ 54.30 /kg
>50 kg	£ 75.60/kg	£ 54.5/kg	£ 78.75 /kg	£ 51.60 /kg

WILD Black tea

Harvested once per year from the same rewilded forest as the white tea. Long Imeretian style twisted leaves which yield an excellent light red infusion gently tannic.



Clockwise from top:
Wild Black tea; Wild White tea; White tea (summer harvest);

Our tea range

Guji's low altitude Imeretian tea

WILD white tea

Spring and summer teas are available from this acacia woodland, a rewilded former plantation which is now extremely lightly managed for its tea crop.

The spring tea has a smell and taste very similar to the smell of freshly picked leaves; very fresh flavour, deepening for the second infusion which starts to yellow. Holding so much flavour from the fresh leaf, it's an excellent expression of these bushes.

The summer version has slightly larger leaves, and is bolder, as expected from a summer tea. Maybe a touch less nuanced than the sweet, spring tea, summer teas can be a better choice for those who like a punchier white tea that retains that freshness characteristic of Guji's teas.

WILD Black tea

In keeping with the farming philosophy of this forest farm, this is a very gentle but complex black tea. By not oxidising to a deep black, Guji aims for the lighter tea flavours which better express the terroir of this unique location. The sweet acacia flower aroma and flavour is notable - whether or not this truly comes from the rich woodland soil of composting acacia blossom and leaves, I couldn't say.

Silver needle white tea

This is an immensely labour intensive tea for its weight, being just the tiny buds, or 'tips', harvested before they open into leaves. The fine downy hairs on the buds give a silvery sheen, lending the name to this Chinese-style tea.



Wild white tea, summer harvest



Wild black tea

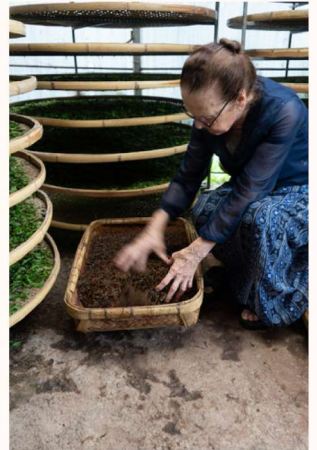
	Wild White tea	Wild Black tea	Silver needle white tea
0-25 kg	£ 118 /kg	£ - /kg	£ POA
25-50 kg	£ 109 /kg	£ 109 /kg	£ -
>50 kg	£ 104.95 /kg	£ 104.95 /kg	£ -

The producers

Nargiza, Tsalenjikha

Nargiza is one of our favourite tea people in Georgia. She's just turned 80 year old and still runs her little factory and tea plantation. She's also the head tea technologist of the bigger factory next door and she knows a thing or two about tea.

Nargiza started working in tea when she was 12 years old. In school holidays, Soviet children would help with harvests and in Samegrelo this meant tea. Georgia was the first country to develop mechanical harvesting technology, but in the early days of the 1950s, they were still hand picking teas of excellent quality.



Nargiza studied tea technology for 6 years before moving to Tbilisi to work in a tea laboratory for another two. Back then, it was a well paid job to be a tea scientist. Georgian tea science was some of the most advanced in the world as the teams at Anaseuli developed cultivars and methods suited to the Georgian climate, quality requirements and then, later, mass production techniques.

She continued on in her career as a tea technologist - combining her scientific training with deep knowledge of the craft of tea production.

Her 4 hectare plantation at 295m altitude, on a hill just outside the town of Tsalenjikha. She is helped in her factory by Mzia, pictured below.



The producers

Tornike, Imereti

Tornike is the go-to guy for white tea. I've never met someone who can talk about the effects of sunlight and weather on the chlorophyll content of tea leaves with such passion.

Tornike's village is high up in the mountains and the site of former Soviet tea breeding research plantations. Here he is blessed with the hardest Georgian cultivars, Kolkhida I and II, as well as the old Chinese and - unusually for Georgia - Japanese cultivars, from which they were bred.

As well as his plantation, Tornike harvests tea from old plantations which have rewilded since their post-Soviet abandonment.



Whereas most abandoned plantations overgrow with bracken and brambles, conditions were right here for native forest trees to grow up between the bushes. 40 years on, these form a total canopy and complete, mature woodland ecosystem.

He spent several months studying in China in 2019. White teas are his real passion and it shows in his teas and the care in the processing. This village is one which supplies miners to the polluting manganese industry of Chiatura; Tornike now employs up to 15 pickers seasonally who, he half-jokes, have finally understood and become enthusiastic for his strict picking standards.

Tornike grows by the Georgian Organic Tea Producers' Association principles, a regenerative agriculture certification scheme. It is not internationally accredited as organic.



The producers

Guji, Imereti

Wild tea only here!

Originally planted in 1937 on this hilly patch, long before Soviet tractors and machine harvesting, this plantation overgrew following abandonment in the '90s.

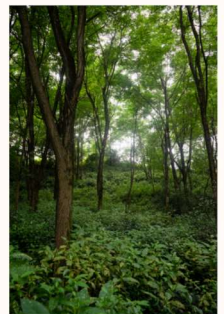
These days, it's covered by a canopy of tall acacia trees which drop their flowers each spring, building a rich compost woodland floor.



He sees the tea factory as a social project: in the village there's barely any employment. "How much do you normally make each year?" I ask. "As much as they pick. Whenever anyone wants to pluck tea and earn some money, they come over and we make tea." Most of the pickers used to work on the plantation in the '80s, but some of the younger generations find the opportunity useful. Aging demographics is a huge societal problem in rural Georgia as the young search for work in cities and abroad.

Brewing up some white tea back at the house, Guja proudly shows his trophy from a major tea competition in Korea and we try the winning white tea, now aged several years.

Guji makes spring and summer white and black teas separately but is also experimenting with pressed white puer-style teas and flowering white tea. They are all manufactured in the stunningly picturesque outdoor factory sited in a woodland glade amongst the tea bushes.



The producers

Tenieshvilis, Guria

Western Georgia in the 1990s was a different sort of Wild West. Civil war was erupting, mafia groups ruled and fought and industry was crippled. Electricity was an intermittent luxury and tea was expensive and imported.

Guria is the heartland of Georgian tea. It was the site of the Anaseuli Tea Research Institute and was filled with hectares and hectares of tea bushes. Dato lived amongst the overgrowing bushes, and, dipping a teabag one day, realised how unnecessary this all was.



At first, he plucked tea and rolled it by hand, but soon enough he'd cobbled together a tea roller from an old barrel and some roofing sheets, getting round the electricity issue with a homemade waterwheel to dunk in the river.

Dato and his son Gabrieli are firm believers in natural methods and the path to their tea factory winds through their kitchen garden and orchard which drips with fresh pears and kiwis. As their enterprise grew, so too did the Georgian Organic

Producers' Association, of which they were founding members. This scheme focuses heavily on soil health, and the Tenieshvilis' plantation shows the benefits: rich, healthy and productive bushes fed only by a system of composting. Compared to other producers, it helps Dato was such an early adopter - hence the lovely shape of the bushes which helps give light to all leaves.



These days, they make some really excellent teas, including some wild teas from a nearby rewilded tea forest.

White, green and black teas are available from plantation and forest, as well as Gurian style wild blueberry leaf tisane from the slopes of nearby Gomismta mountain. The wild green is especially highly recommended.

The producers

Shota & Ia, Lechkhumi

I'm pretty sure you know Shota by now! He and his wife, Ia, of course are responsible for our famous, original mulberry and blackberry leaf tisanes.

Shota is unique in not making *camellia sinensis* teas which means his spring season is more free for all his other delicious creations. He specialises in rolled, oxidised herbal tisanes, in which young leaves are put through a similar process to green, oolong or black teas to extract richer, deeper flavours than from most herbals.

This style of tea seems to be most diverse and endemic in his region. Shota makes the classics (blackberry leaf, 'snowrose' rhododendron leaves & flowers), as well as experimenting with new styles (apple leaf; vine leaf).



Almost all of their teas are wild harvested from a few locations around their village including the ancient Mount Khvamli where Prometheus was said to have been chained.

The one exception to wild harvesting is a new tea this year: vine leaf tea. This is harvested from the legendary Usakhelauri grape variety which is grown only in the microclimate of two villages at Khvamli's base. Shota harvests two leaves and a bud - as in tea making - and puts them through a black tea process to make a tangy tisane reminiscent of green tea, raspberry and hibiscus.



The producers

Koba, Imereti

If CERTIFIED ORGANIC is what you need, then Koba has you covered! Contact us with your requirements.

His organically managed plantations were once part of a Soviet tea breeding research programme, so he grows a mix of cultivars: Kolkhida I and II, as well as the Chinese and Japanese cultivars from which these were bred.



As for other organic-method growers, the pervasive bracken and brambles are pulled from between the bushes by hand, a long and arduous process, but so worth it for this amazing tea.

He received EU grant funding recently to upgrade his equipment from an old wood-fired fixing oven and a ginormous Soviet-era roller to state-of-the-art, smaller, batch production equipment so that each leaf gets the same treatment right through the process.

We especially love his green teas, and particularly the Imeretian-style green with its long, twisting leaves. Maybe it's the high altitude and extra-long snowy winters, or maybe it's his skill in the craft. Of course, a bit of both!

In downtime from tea, he turns the little factory to herbal tisanes with local wild oregano and other foraged plants.

Koba's range can also be supplied in individually wrapped and custom-printed teabags.



Who we are

Nela-Nela exists to share Georgia's incredible and little-known tea culture with you and to showcase the work and teas of some incredible tea makers and growers.

Living in Georgia for several years, we became enthusiasts for Georgian tea. We established strong and direct relationships with artisanal tea makers and started out with a range of rolled, oxidised botanical tisanes for our first year.

Tim, Tom and Amy are the trio behind this company. Tom and Amy have both spent the majority of their time in rural Samegrelo. Tim first came to Georgia as a teacher in Ozurgeti more than a decade ago and now splits his time between Tbilisi and Tsageri.

Recognising the immense positive social and environmental impact tea cultivation and responsible wild harvesting could have in Georgia, we hope to spread the joy of Georgian tea far and wide, and back to the growers and makers of every leaf.

In Georgia, "Nela-Nela" - "slowly-slowly" - is a philosophy:
— slow down, the best things in life take time.

Amy and Tim, with Shota at his micro-factory in Tsageri, central Georgia.



Georgia – an ancient country with a forgotten tea culture

Inspired by tea merchants who travelled through Georgia along the Silk Road, people of mountain villages began rolling the leaves of diverse plants that grow across the Caucasus range.

The first tea bushes arrived in Georgia in the 1840s, but cultivation really took off at the turn of the 20th century. By the 1980s, this small Caucasian country's subtropical hills became the world's fourth-largest tea producer, supplying tea to the Soviet Union. The industry collapsed after the fall of the USSR and today, cows graze amongst the abandoned tea fields and factories which became famous for mass-produced low quality teas.

Now several artisanal tea makers are reviving the tea fields using organic methods and skilled craftsmanship to raise the bar of Georgian tea. Alongside exceptional white, black and green teas, they apply their modern tea making knowledge to wither, roll and oxidise a wide range of plant leaves to create and improve their unique and traditional botanical tisanes which started our Nela-Nela journey.

Cows graze amongst a ruined tea factory in Guria, Western Georgia





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