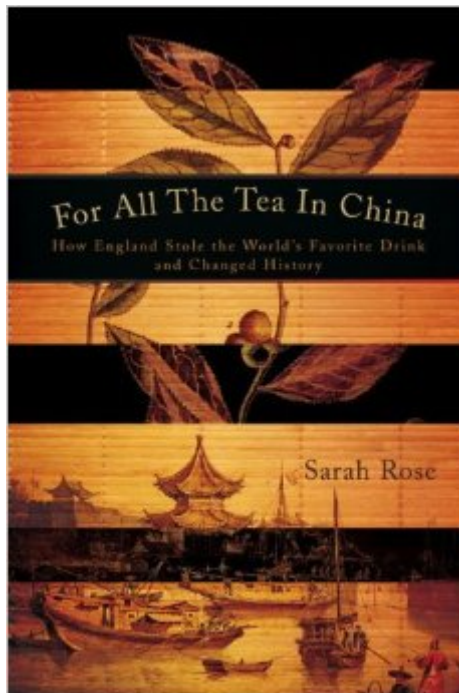


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For All The Tea In China: How England Stole The World's Favorite Drink And Changed History



Synopsis

A dramatic historical narrative of the man who stole the secret of tea from China. In 1848, the British East India Company, having lost its monopoly on the tea trade, engaged Robert Fortune, a Scottish gardener, botanist, and plant hunter, to make a clandestine trip into the interior of China—a "territory forbidden to foreigners"—to steal the closely guarded secrets of tea horticulture and manufacturing. *All the Tea in China* is the remarkable account of Fortune's journeys into China—a thrilling narrative that combines history, geography, botany, natural science, and old-fashioned adventure. Disguised in Mandarin robes, Fortune ventured deep into the country, confronting pirates, hostile climate, and his own untrustworthy men as he made his way to the epicenter of tea production, the remote Wu Yi Shan hills. One of the most daring acts of corporate espionage in history, Fortune's pursuit of China's ancient secret makes for a classic nineteenth-century adventure tale, one in which the fate of empires hinges on the feats of one extraordinary man.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The genre of how one product changed our lives flourishes, and perhaps Britain more than America was so altered by the export of cheap, tasty black tea in Victorian times. Yet, Rose shows how globalization, the drug trade, rapid transport, and botanical espionage and corporate deceit managed to boost Robert Fortune into his modest role as the East India Company's operative who'd pluck Chinese tea seeds and smuggle them out in glass boxes to India, where they would become

the hybrids mingled with Himalayan plants to make the black tea we enjoy today. This would earn billions for a British empire tangled in the opium trade with a restive China, and replace that nation's supply of tea with that grown by its more reliable subjects in India. This shift kept English domination, expanded globalization, set off quicker tea clippers to bring tea to an invigorated porcelain and clay manufacturing region, and would increase health standards as less beer and more water was boiled and then brewed. Tea picking, she explains, is as if the topmost boughs and last couple of leaves of a Christmas tree were selected. Extremely laborious to gather, 32,000 shoots make ten pounds, nearly what a picker could gather in a day. Five pounds of fresh leaves produce one dry pound. I found such details intriguing. As Vine offers a proof to read, I do not know if maps and pictures will be included, but no such evidence is in my copy. These features would have enriched the text, for while Rose tells the journeys of Fortune carefully, Western readers unfamiliar with China might have benefited from charts here.

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