

TEA CONSUMPTION PREFERENCES AMONG ROMANIAN CUSTOMERS

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Abstract: *Tea consumption in Romania remains relatively low compared to other countries, with coffee traditionally being the beverage of choice. However, there is a gradual shift as consumers begin to explore tea options. This study examines the preferences and consumption patterns of Romanian tea consumers to understand both the drivers and barriers influencing their choices. Surveys conducted across various regions in Romania in 2024 provide data on consumer behavior, motivations, and perceptions regarding tea. Driven by health considerations and lifestyle changes. Recommendations suggest that tea producers and retailers should focus on educational marketing campaigns, product diversification, and improving accessibility to encourage increased tea consumption.*

Key words: *consumer preferences, tea, hot beverages consumption.*

INTRODUCTION

Tea is among the most widely consumed beverages worldwide, second only to water, and has a rich history of traditional use and cultural significance. Originating in China around 2737 BC, tea spread through East Asia and eventually gained prominence in regions such as the Middle East, Europe, and beyond [14,15]. Today, global tea production exceeds 6.3 million metric tons, driven by its status as both a culturally significant beverage and a potentially health-promoting product [4]. The plant *Camellia sinensis* yields various types of tea—white, green, black, and others—whose distinct compositions result from different processing methods [6]. Notably, green tea contains high concentrations of polyphenolic compounds, especially catechins, which have been linked to antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties, while black tea also exhibits beneficial effects, albeit to a somewhat lesser extent [10,13]. Recent studies point to a range of potential health benefits of tea consumption, including effects on cardiovascular health, metabolic regulation, and possible cancer-preventive properties [5,7].

Despite this global popularity, tea consumption in Romania remains relatively low compared with other nations, where coffee has traditionally dominated consumer preferences [9,11]. However, Romanian consumers are gradually diversifying their beverage choices and showing increased interest in tea. In response, tea producers and retailers are beginning to focus on product diversification, improved accessibility, and education-driven marketing campaigns that highlight tea’s sensory variety, cultural heritage, and health-enhancing potential. Such efforts align with the global trends where rising health awareness, culinary innovation (e.g., specialty teas, cold brews, and fusion beverages), and sustainable production practices are reshaping the tea market [1,3,8].

Against this background, the present study aims to examine the specific preferences and consumption patterns of Romanian tea consumers, based on quantitative data from a 2024 survey. By analyzing attitudes toward different tea varieties and brands, as well as the comparative preference for tea over coffee, the research seeks to identify the drivers behind changing beverage choices. The findings provide valuable insights into strategic approaches for promoting tea consumption in Romania, offering recommendations for stakeholders to leverage health and wellness trends, enhance consumer education, and further invigorate the domestic tea market. Furthermore, other studies on products commonly consumed with tea can provide insight into tea consumption patterns [12].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A cross-sectional survey was conducted to evaluate tea consumption preferences among Romanian consumers. A structured questionnaire created in Google Forms was administered to 105 participants to gather information on their behaviors, motivations, and perceptions related to tea. The sampling method used was convenience sampling, by publishing the link to the questionnaire on dedicated social media groups. The primary aim was to identify the key factors driving tea consumption choices within this population. Descriptive statistical methods were used to analyze the collected data, which were subsequently presented in tables and graphical formats to illustrate observed patterns and trends.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Figure 1 shows that the most frequently cited motivations are relaxation and stress relief (43.30%), followed by perceived health benefits (39.18%). A smaller proportion of participants highlighted hydration (8.25%) and seeking an alternative to sugary drinks (4.12%) as reasons for consuming tea. Meanwhile, a minimal percentage (1.03%) indicated a preference for tea due to its stimulating effect, and 4.12% reported not drinking tea at all.

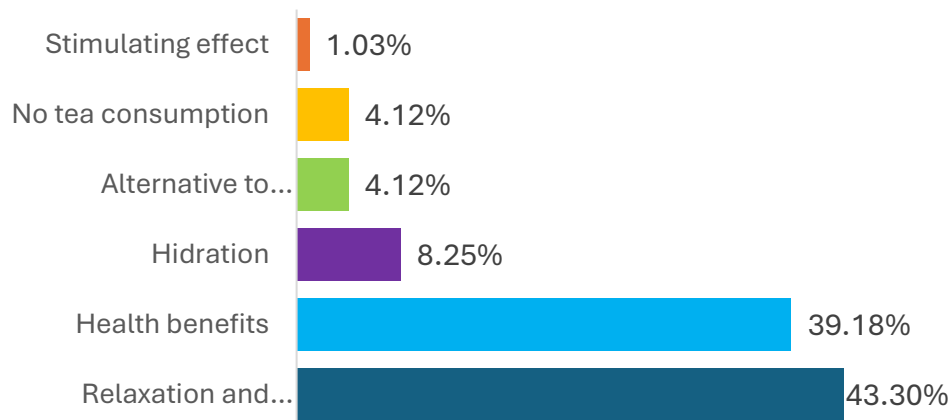


Figure 1. Main drivers of tea consumption among respondents

Source: Own work, 2024

As seen in Figure 2, the largest share of participants (34.41%) reported consuming tea on a weekly basis, followed by 30.11% who consume it several times per month. Approximately one-quarter (24.73%) are daily tea drinkers, whereas smaller proportions indicated monthly consumption (4.30%) or only several times per year (6.45%).

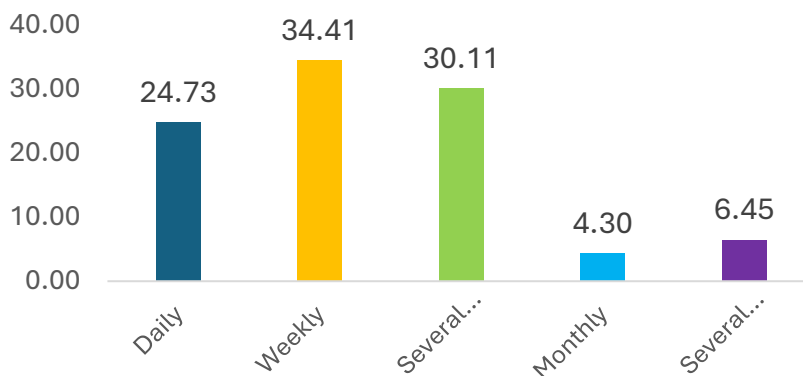


Figure 2. Consumption frequency for tea

Source: Own work, 2024

As seen in Figure 3, fruit-flavored options dominate at 54.35%, followed by chamomile (14.13%) and green tea (8.70%). Mint, matcha, ginger, and black teas together account for the remaining share, indicating a broader but less prominent range of preferences. This distribution shows a clear preference for sweeter, more flavorful varieties, with fruit-flavored teas comprising over half of total preferences [2]. Chamomile’s sizable share indicates the importance of calming and soothing properties among Romanian consumers, while green tea’s growing popularity reflects increasing awareness of its health advantages. Mint, matcha, ginger, and black teas together account for a smaller but meaningful segment, suggesting that although these types have less widespread appeal, they retain a niche following among consumers seeking distinctive tastes or specific health benefits.

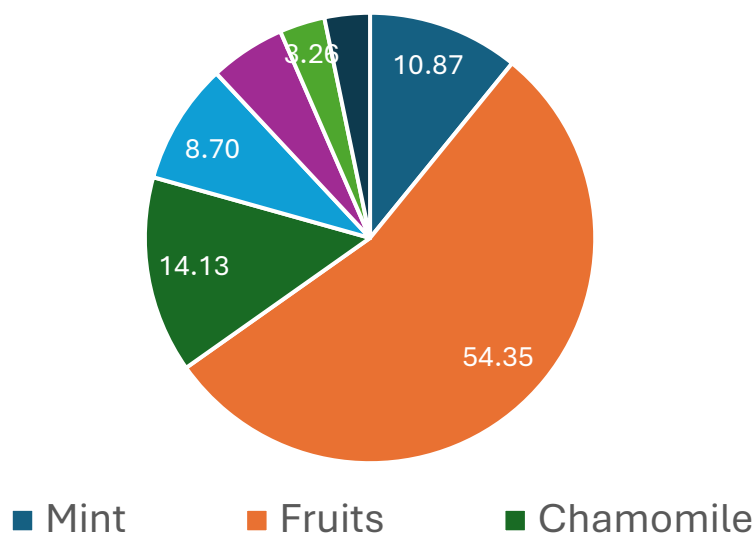


Figure 3. Tea types consumed

Source: Own work, 2024

Figure 4 shows that The largest share (44.09%) falls into the “Other” category, reflecting a wide array of brands beyond those listed. Of the specific brands reported, Fares is the most frequently chosen (25.81%), followed by “no specific brand preference” (12.90%), Lipton (8.60%), homemade teas (5.38%), and Loyd (3.23%).

From these data, it appears that Romanian consumers have a wide variety of tea brand preferences, with nearly half (44.09%) indicating brands outside the major labels included in the survey. Among the listed brands, Fares commands a noteworthy share (25.81%), suggesting it is relatively well-established or recognizable within this market. Interestingly, 12.90% of respondents explicitly stated they do not have any specific brand preference, pointing to a segment of consumers who may base their purchasing decisions on factors such as price, availability, or flavor variety rather than brand loyalty.

Brands like Lipton (8.60%) and Loyd (3.23%) retain smaller, but still significant, followings, while homemade teas (5.38%) reflect a niche interest in more personalized or possibly more natural tea options. Overall, the large “Other” category underscores the diversity and fragmentation within the Romanian tea market, where consumers might explore numerous local or specialty brands in addition to—or instead of—well-known international labels.

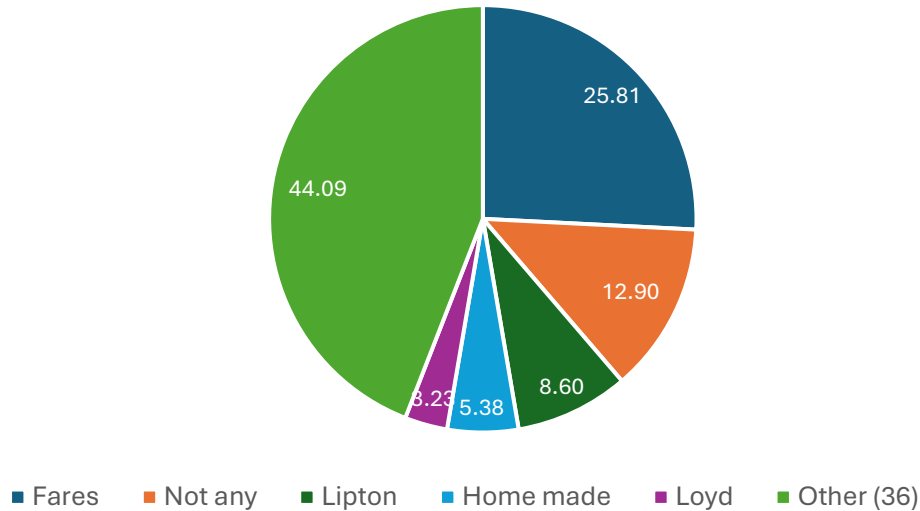


Figure 4. Tea brands consumed

Source: Own work, 2024

CONCLUSIONS

The findings from this study highlight several key insights into Romanian consumers' tea consumption behaviors. First, relaxation (43.3%) and health benefits (39.2%) emerge as primary motivators, underscoring tea's perceived role in stress relief and wellness. Second, while weekly consumption is most common, daily drinkers constitute a smaller but potentially growing segment. Third, fruit-flavored teas lead consumer preferences by a substantial margin (54.35%), suggesting a strong inclination toward sweeter, more accessible flavors. Chamomile's popularity (14.13%) further illustrates demand for calming properties, and green tea (8.70%) reflects a nascent but expanding interest in health-oriented varieties. Finally, brand preferences are notably fragmented, with the largest share (44.09%) falling into the "Other" category, indicating a diversity of choices and potential for niche brands. Taken together, these patterns suggest opportunities for tea producers and marketers to emphasize flavor variety, health-focused benefits, and brand differentiation in order to meet the evolving needs of the Romanian market.

This study is limited by a small sample size and convenience sampling, which reduces generalizability. Self-reported data also risk recall or social desirability bias. Furthermore, the cross-sectional design only captures a moment in time, making it difficult to track long-term or seasonal shifts in tea consumption.

Tea producers, retailers, and marketers can nevertheless use these findings to develop offerings that highlight relaxation, health benefits, and diverse flavors, focusing on the targeted market segment present in this survey. Public health authorities and nutritionists may utilize the insights to encourage healthier alternatives to sugary beverages. Researchers could also build on these data for further consumer behavior studies in Romania.

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