Breakfast / China

# Tea Eggs (Chá Yè Dàn)

Hard-boiled eggs cracked and simmered in a brew of black tea, soy, star anise, and cinnamon, developing a beautiful crackled marble pattern and a deeply savory, tea-smoky flavor.

**Time** 300 min **Servings** 4

## What you'll need.

- ☐ 100 parts Large eggs (room temperature)
- ☐ 80 parts Strong brewed black tea (Assam or Yunnan, double strength)
- ☐ 20 parts Dark soy sauce
- ☐ 10 parts Light soy sauce
- ☐ 2 parts Star anise (whole, 3-4 pieces)
- ☐ 1 parts Cinnamon stick
- ☐ 0.5 parts Whole cloves (3-4)
- ☐ 0.5 parts Sichuan peppercorns (1 tsp, lightly crushed)
- ☐ 3 parts Rock sugar (small piece) or white sugar
- ☐ 1 parts Dried mandarin peel (chen pi) or fresh orange peel

## Let's make it.

**01** Place eggs in a single layer in a saucepan. Cover with cold water by 2 cm. Bring to a full boil over medium-high heat. Once boiling, cover and remove from heat. Let stand for exactly 10 minutes, then transfer to an ice bath for 5 minutes. The eggs should be fully hard-boiled with no grey ring at the yolk — they will be simmered further and need to start fully cooked.

**02** Using the back of a spoon, tap each egg all over its surface to create a fine network of cracks through the shell. The goal is to crack the shell without removing it — the shell must stay on to hold its shape during simmering. Cracks should be dense and close-set across the entire surface, like a cracked glaze on a ceramic piece.

**03** Combine the strong black tea, both soy sauces, star anise, cinnamon, cloves, Sichuan peppercorns, sugar, and mandarin peel in a pot large enough to hold all the eggs in one layer. Bring to a simmer and add the cracked eggs. Simmer gently for 20 minutes — the shells should not bounce around. Remove from heat, let cool to room temperature in the liquid, then refrigerate in the braising liquid for a minimum of 4 hours, or overnight for the deepest color and flavor.

**04** Peel each egg under cold running water, removing the shell fragments and the inner membrane together. The revealed surface should show a striking marble pattern: dark brown-black staining along every crack line set against the pale amber of the stained egg white. Serve whole or halved, at room temperature or cold.

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Servings are an estimate; check quantities in the source recipe.
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