

Single-Origin Hand-Made Teas, Coffees, Spices and Preserves

About Amba Estate

Amba Estate is a community-run social enterprise. Our organic farm nestles at 1000m, high above the Ravana-Ella waterfalls in the Uva mountains of Sri Lanka. Our goal is to maximise local incomes, while preserving the natural environment. Our motto is “If it grows, turn it into a product!”. We want to show local farmers that, rather than just selling raw produce to large processors, they can do their own processing to create much higher value products. As such, we produce a range of artisanal products right on the farm. Amba is most famous for our hand-made teas – we were the first estate in Sri Lanka to start hand-rolling black and green teas, more in the style of China or Japan; and our teas have been sold or served in many of the most famous shops and restaurants around the world. We also process a range of spices and herbs, including cinnamon, lemongrass, cloves, pepper and more; we wet-process and roast our own coffee and cascara, and we produce a range of jams and chutneys, which we supply to boutique hotels and restaurants around Sri Lanka.

Amba Estate Hand-Made Teas and Tisanes

All our teas are hand-made on the farm, using only the finest leaves and buds. Like fine wines, our teas vary according to the terroir, cultivar, season and processing method. A founding member of the Ceylon Artisanal Tea Association, Amba is one of a handful of artisanal tea-makers in Sri Lanka today.

“Champagne” White Tea Stars

Like all white teas, we pluck only the youngest buds from each tea bush. For our tea stars, we tie together 16 individual buds, and we serve each star in a martini glass: steep slowly and watch the star unfurl. Beautiful to watch and delicious to drink, this white tea has a pale golden “champagne” colour and a delicate, sweet floral taste with melon notes. It is best drunk chilled or at room-temperature.



Amba Golden Tips

Amba’s loose-leaf white tea. Our pluckers carefully select particularly long buds which we find only in one area of the farm. These buds are then gently dried, with no further processing, so as to retain the purest flavours. Like our tea stars, our golden tips produce a delicate golden liquor and sweet floral flavours, with hints of honey and citrus notes. Can be drunk hot or slightly chilled.



“Pitu-Bambuwa” Green

A classic green-tea: we pluck only one-leaf-and-bud; as soon as the leaves come in from the field, we steam them in a traditional bamboo rice-steamer; then we gently roll the leaves by hand in a “kula” basket and dry the leaves in a wok. This green tea offers classic grassy, vegetal flavours, with a slightly oceanic-umami nose and bittersweet aftertaste.



Slow-Withered Pan-Roast Green

This unique tea is part green and part oolong: we pluck one-leaf-and-bud; then, unlike most green teas, we gently wither the leaves overnight; we then cook and roll the leaves in a wok and kula basket, and repeat until the leaves are dry. Buttery caramel and citrus notes layer with soft vegetal and fruity peach accents with a hint of nutty mint.



Amba Uva Oolong

A classic oolong: we pluck one-leaf-and-bud, gently wither the leaves overnight, then steam them in a traditional steamer and roll them in a kula basket. The tea has full bodied floral, grassy-buttery and honey notes, with a hint of the wintergreen that Uva teas are famous for (this flavour, which comes from a silicate in the soil, is increasingly rare, due to planting of clones and overuse of fertilizers on larger estates).



Hand-Rolled Tippy Golden Orange Pekoe (TGOP)

Our signature black tea is made using only one-leaf-and-bud. After withering, the same ladies who plucked the leaves roll the leaf by hand, half-a-kilo at a time. The leaves are then oxidised and dried in our biomass dryer. The dry leaf has a fruit, toffee and citrus fragrance. The liquor is a mid-copper gold and has complex notes of dried fruit, sweet meadow grass, citrus and a hint of classic Uva wintergreen.



Hand-Rolled Tippy Golden Orange Pekoe (TGOP) with Tea Flowers

Another unique tea: tea is often mixed with jasmine, roses and 101 other flowers, but no-one blends tea with tea-flowers (largely because collecting the tiny flowers is so expensive). We carefully pick and gently dry the flowers from our tea bushes and blend them with our finest TGOP. The result is an incredibly smooth tea, with heavenly honey and almond notes from the golden flowers.



Hand-Rolled Amba Black Tea Gems

These gems are also unique. Like our TGOP, they are hand-rolled using only one-leaf-and-bud. Before oxidisation, they are moulded by hand into small gems that resemble mini Pu-erh. The gems make for beautiful presentation and “portion control” and dissolve to create a coppery liquor with a robust flavour.



Vangedi Pekoe (“Thieves Tea” or “Illegal tea”)

This black tea is made the same way that estate workers make tea at home. Leaves are pounded in a stone “vangedi” (mortar) before oxidising and drying. It’s illegal to make this tea on the big Estates since it means the workers must be “pocketing” the leaves! Amba is the only estate to make this tea commercially.



Mini-Rolled Broken Orange Pekoe (BOP)

More like a classic English Breakfast, this tea is made using a mini tea-roller that we had custom-built for our small-scale production. We use 2 leaves and a bud to produce a more robust every-day tea, with classic Uva characteristics. Ideal for those who like to drink their tea with milk.



Mini-rolled BOP with Cinnamon

Mini-rolled BOP with Ginger

Mini-rolled BOP with Lemongrass

Our mini-rolled black tea gently flavoured with organic spices grown on the farm. The subtle herbal flavours and aromas add a little spice to a classic black tea.



Spiced Chai

We blend our mini-rolled BOP with a magic combination of organic spices grown on the farm: cinnamon, cloves, coriander, fennel, ginger, pepper and red chilli. We wanted to make a distinctively Sri Lankan Chai, so we left out the cardamom which dominates Indian chai and increased the pepper! The resulting tea is redolent of mulled wine and makes a perfect hot chai or an invigorating iced-tea.



Sumudu Chai ("Smooth Chai")

For Christmas one year, we wanted to make a chai that was less spicy. So we left out the coriander, fennel, pepper and chili, and we blend our BOP with a smooth combination of cinnamon, cloves and ginger. This sweeter chai tastes just like Christmas-in-a-cup and also makes a perfect hot chai or a silky-smooth iced-tea.



Lemongrass Tisane

Citronella, a close relative, grows wild on the hills around Amba, so we knew lemongrass would do well; but for some reason, the colour, aroma and flavour of Amba lemongrass is stronger than any other. This may be partly due to our dry gravelly soil, and partly because the grass is chopped and dried as soon as it is harvested, locking freshness in. The resulting tisane offers a mix of flavours: lemon, pepper, honey and menthol, with an aroma almost like eau-de-cologne.



Blue Butterfly Pea Flower & Lemongrass Tisane

The Butterfly Pea has long been grown in gardens in our area and is renowned for its antioxidant and anti-inflammatory benefits. We collect and dry the flowers and blend them with Amba's famous lemongrass. The resulting blend has a citrus flavour similar to our regular lemongrass and a brilliant blue hue. Add a few drops of citrus or anything acidic, and the blue changes to purple. A delicious and refreshing tisane, which also makes a great mixer for cocktails and mocktails!



Special Tea Gift Packs

Gift Box with white tea stars, black tea gems, or a mix of both

Each box is crafted from recycled paper and contains a selection of Amba's finest Champagne White Tea Stars and/or Black Tea Gems. Each box contains *either* 8 White Tea Stars, *or* 16 Black Tea Gems, *or* a combo of 4 Tea Stars and 8 Tea Gems.



Leaf Gift Bags

A special leaf-shaped hand-loom bag containing either 30g of TGOP or Lemongrass, or 50g of Vangedi Pekoe. The bags are hand-stitched by ladies resident at Mulleriyawa Halfway-Home at the National Institute for Mental Health. Aside from providing vocational training for the ladies, all proceeds from sales of the bags go to provide income and support for residents of the Home.



Spiced Chai Gift Box

A wooden box hand-made by one of the men in the village, stamped with a special chilli warning symbol, containing 50g of Spiced Chai.



Amba Estate Hand-Made Coffee & Cascara

Ceylon used to be one of the world's top coffee exporters until coffee-rust wiped out the industry in the late 19th Century. In 2007, lamenting the poor quality of coffee available in Sri Lanka, the sponsors of Amba started planting Arabica Coffee with a view to supplying the local market. To date, we have planted more than 3000 trees, and we recently set up the Ella Coffee Collective. The Collective has set up the first "wet-processing" station for coffee cherries in this part of Sri Lanka. The idea is that more local farmers will increase their incomes by planting and harvesting coffee, now that they have a local facility where they can sell their cherries. The collective has only been operating for a few months, but already we are purchasing more than 1000kg of cherries from local farmers every month.

Artisanal Pan-Roast Arabica Coffee

All of our coffee is made with arabica beans sourced from the estate or local farmers. After wet-processing the cherries, we pan-roast the beans by hand in 1kg batches, and then sift and cool them in a traditional kula basket. The coffee has an incredibly rich, chocolatey flavour. Our default roast is medium-dark, but we can produce lighter or darker roasts, as required. To ensure freshness, we prefer to ship whole beans, but we can supply ground coffee, if desired.



Cascara

Cascara is a tisane made from dried coffee cherries. Since Amba set up our own coffee-washing station, we are able to collect and dry coffee-cherry skins, as well as coffee beans. Cascara is said to have strong anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects. Our cascara has a rich fruity flavour, with hints of tea and coffee.



Amba Estate Organic Spices & Natural Forest Products

Organic Spices: Cinnamon, Cloves, Black Pepper

Over the last 10 years, we have planted hundreds of spice trees and vines, including cinnamon, pepper, vanilla, cardamom and turmeric, alongside older clove trees and tamarind trees. All of our spices are organic, processed by hand and dried naturally on the farm.



Garam Masala and Curry Powder

The secret ingredients behind Amba's famous curries! Our trademark curry powder and garam masala concocted by the Amba chefs.



Raw Bee Honey

Pure natural honey collected by one of our neighbours from hives in the forest area of Amba Valley. We simply pasteurise and bottle the honey here at Amba.



Pure Forest-grown Kithul Treacle

Kithul treacle is one of Sri Lanka's most iconic products, with a rich smoky flavour. The treacle-sap is tapped from the large flower on top of the kithul tree, a type of fish-tail palm. One of our neighbours collects the treacle from the dozens of kithul trees in our forest.

Amba Estate Hand-Made Jams, Chutneys and Preserves

The full name of Amba Estate is Ambagaswatte, meaning “Mango Tree Gardens”. More than half the estate is forest and home to dozens of old fruit trees: mango, avocado, jack-fruit, bread-fruit, etc. To encourage shade-cover and soil-fertility, the sponsors of Amba have planted hundreds of additional fruit trees over the last 10 years. In line with our mission to show local farmers how to maximise value-addition from all the crops in the area, we produce a range of jams, chutneys and preserves using fruit grown on the estate and around the valley.

Jam and Marmalade

All of Amba’s jams are made by hand in small batches, using fruit growing in and around the Estate. The jams are made using 100% natural ingredients, with no artificial preservatives. We try to use minimal amounts of sugar, so they offer sharp, refreshing flavours. The range of jams varies depending on the season, but some of our most popular flavours include:

- Papaya Passion and Vanilla Jam
- Mango and Ginger Jam
- Three-Fruit Marmalade made from a combination of sweet oranges, bitter oranges and kumquat
- Jambu (rose-apple) and Lime Jam
- Guava Jelly



Chutneys

One of our aims is to encourage our neighbours to set up their own businesses to benefit from increased tourism in our valley. In 2018, with support from Planeterra Foundation, we set up the Six-Stars Chutney Cooperative. We selected 6 of Amba’s best tea-pickers to be founding members of the coop: each lady received equipment and training so that they could start producing chutneys, utilizing fruits and vegetables growing in the area. All the chutneys are made with 100% natural ingredients, based on traditional village recipes. Like our jams, the range depends on the season, but some of the most popular flavours include Jackfruit Chutney, Mango Chutney, Papaya Chutney, Tomato Chutney, Lime Chutney and Onion Chutney.



Whole-Grain Mustard

A delicious mustard made by one of the ladies in our village using only locally-grown mustard, vinegar and salt. The only natural, pure Dijon-style mustard to be found in Sri Lanka.



Handicrafts from Amba's neighbours and partners

In line with our mission to maximise local incomes, we are encouraging everyone in our valley to make handicrafts to sell in the farm shop and as gift items for our customers around the world. We are constantly adding to the range, so please check if you are looking for specific gift items.

Mulleriyawa Puppets

Like our leaf-shaped hand-loom bags, all proceeds from sales of these cute hand-puppets and finger-puppets go to benefit the ladies who make them – all of whom are residents of Mulleriyawa Halfway Home at the National Institute for Mental Health.



"Happy: Personal Reflections on Mental Well-Being"

Resulting from Amba's work with Mulleriyawa, Beverly and 2 other volunteers published this book in 2013. The book draws on comments and observations of the Mulleriyawa ladies, Amba's workers, and a range of famous authors, cricketers and others to examine attitudes and beliefs about mental wellness. All proceeds from sales of the book go to support projects at Mulleriyawa.



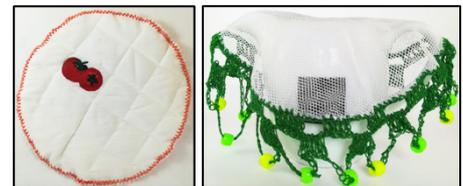
Sudumenike's Sisal Hand-Bags and Table-Mats

Sudumenike, one of our retired tea-pluckers, makes these beautiful clutch-bags, table-mats and drinks-coasters using natural fibres made from the giant sisal plants growing around our valley.



Rashika's Hand-made Coasters, Food Covers, Bags and Purses

Rashika makes hand-loom coasters hand-painted with simple ink designs and crochet mats and purses. She also makes very useful beaded-nets for covering jugs and food items, and very practical shopping bags made from recycled saris.



Nadika's Key-Rings, Quilling Boxes, Greeting Cards, and Wrapping Paper

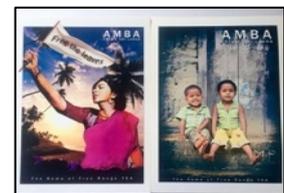
Nadika and some other ladies in the village are making various items using "quilled" paper designs: key-rings, mini-boxes and greeting cards. Others are hand-printing beautiful wrapping paper, using leaves and flowers from the valley.



Amba Art and Accessories

Amba Postcards

A range of unique postcards designed and printed by Beverly Wainwright, the original mastermind behind Amba's range of hand-made products. Images include paintings by Amba's team and guests, as well as humorous remakes of movie-posters extolling the virtues of tea.



Amba T-Shirts, Aprons, Hats, Rain-Coats and Overalls!

For the truly fashion-conscious, nothing can beat the style of our AMBA-branded clothing. Go hiking in your very own AMBA sun-hat and rain-coat; cook up a storm in your AMBA apron; and get busy in the fields in your AMBA overalls and polo-shirt!

