

## **Awa Bancha Tea**

Awa Bancha tea has a distinct aroma and an acidic taste that come from fermentation of the leaves, and has been made by the same method for at least 400 years. In Kamikatsu, Awa Bancha is served more often than green tea. It is naturally low in caffeine, and so is safe for drinking by pregnant women and people of all ages.

### *How It Is Made*

From July to mid-August, tea leaves are picked by hand and then boiled to kill harmful bacteria. The leaves are then immediately rolled using traditional equipment and placed inside barrels. Air is removed from the barrels to encourage anaerobic lactic fermentation from atmospheric lactobacilli, and fermentation continues for two weeks to a month. Afterward, the leaves are dried in the sun for two to three days, and the process is finished. This production method was designated an Intangible Cultural Property in 2018.

### *Health Benefits*

Awa Bancha contains Pyrogallol, which has been found to help control and relieve allergies like hay fever, according to Professor Fukui Hiroyuki of Tokushima University.

### *Enjoying Variety*

No two Awa Bancha teas are alike, due to differences in lactic acid bacteria, field altitudes, and soil quality. The Kamikatsu Awa Bancha Tea Festival in late September offers a rare opportunity to meet tea farmers and taste and compare the different teas.