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Characterizing volatile metabolites in raw Pu'er tea stored in wet-hot or dry-cold environments by performing metabolomic analysis and using the molecular sensory science approach

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Title

Characterizing volatile metabolites in raw Pu'er tea stored in wet-hot or dry-cold environments by performing metabolomic analysis and using the molecular sensory science approach

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Abstract

The aroma profile of raw pu'er tea (RPT) depends on its storage duration (2–10 years) and storage conditions (wet-hot or dry-cold environment). We analyzed the major odorants of RPT samples by performing metabolomic analysis and by using the molecular sensory science approach. Under dry-cold storage conditions, tea leaves had more carotenoid derivatives, glycoside-derived volatiles, and phenolic volatiles, resulting in "fresh," "floral," and "sweet" aroma. Under wet-hot storage conditions, tea leaves had more methoxybenzenes, which contributed considerably to their "stale" and "woody" aroma. We identified 11 and 4 compounds as the odor markers of RPTs when stored in dry-cold and wet-hot environments, respectively. Our findings provide a scientific basis for optimal storage that yields the desired aroma profile.



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