

US Tea Import Analysis – February 2026*

Source: GATS HS 0902 Monthly Import Data

Analytical Note on Baseline Comparisons

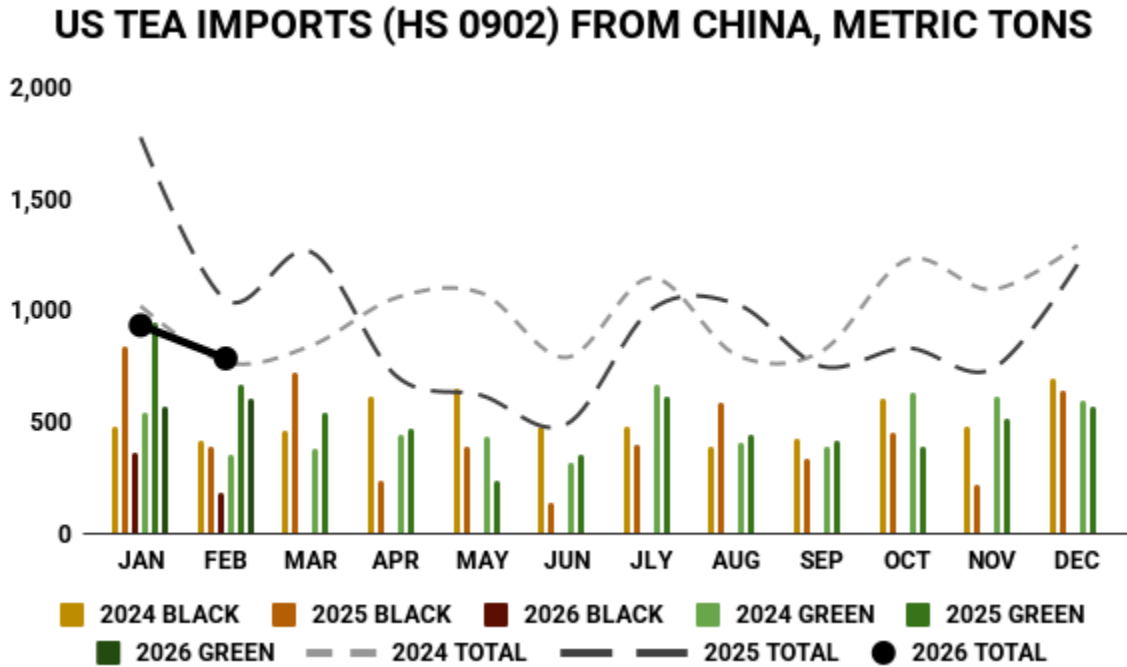
February 2025 was a continued front-loading month: China's February 2025 total of 1,045.5 MT was 36.7% above February 2024 (765.0 MT), as importers continued accumulating inventory ahead of anticipated tariff changes. Although less extreme than January 2025 (+74.3%), the February 2025 baseline is still meaningfully elevated. Throughout this report, February 2024 figures are provided as the normalized reference benchmark (highlighted columns). All YTD figures cover January–February 2026.

1. Total World Imports – YTD vs. Prior YTD

Metric	Feb 26 (YTD)	Feb 25 (YTD)	Feb 24 (norm.)	YoY vs. 25	vs. 24
World Volume (MT)	17,103.6	20,289.9	16,217.4	-15.7%	+5.5%
World Value (USD)	\$95,115K	\$94,794K	\$84,016K	+0.3%	+13.2%
Avg. Price (\$/kg)	\$5.35	\$4.57	\$5.19	+17.1%	+3.1%

YTD world imports of 17,103.6 MT are 15.7% below the front-loaded 2025 baseline but 5.5% above January–February 2024, indicating a healthy underlying market. Values are essentially flat YoY (+0.3%) despite the volume decline, as prices have risen 17.1% from the front-loaded lows of early 2025.

2. Current Month Total China Imports vs. Same Month Prior Year



Metric	Feb 2026	Feb 2025 (f-l)	Feb 2024 (norm.)	YoY vs. 25	vs. 24
China Volume (MT)	782.5	1,045.5	765.0	-25.2%	+2.3%
China Value (USD)	\$4,593K	\$4,559K	\$4,766K	+0.7%	-3.6%
Avg. Price (\$/kg)	\$5.87	\$4.36	\$6.23	+34.6%	-5.8%
China % of World Vol.	10.0%	10.6%	9.8%	-0.6 pp	+0.2 pp

Against the elevated February 2025 baseline, China’s 782.5 MT appears as a 25.2% decline. Against the normalized February 2024 figure of 765.0 MT, the picture is effectively flat (+2.3%). China’s market share at 10.0% is nearly identical to February 2024’s 9.8%, confirming that the large share swings seen in YoY comparisons are baseline artifacts. The average price of \$5.87/kg reflects a more normalized import composition versus early 2025’s lower-priced bulk front-loading.

| *Normalized (vs. Feb 2024): China total volume is essentially unchanged at +2.3%. Market share is stable at ~10%.*

3. China Green Tea

YTD Volume & Market Share

Metric	YTD 2026	YTD 2025 (f-l)	YTD 2024 (norm.)	YoY vs. 25	vs. 24
China Green (MT)	1,172.9	1,604.1	885.1	-26.9%	+32.5%
World Green (MT)	2,871.4	3,593.8	2,647.9	-20.1%	+8.4%
China % of World Green	40.9%	44.6%	33.4%	-3.7 pp	+7.5 pp

Current Month Detail

HS Category	Feb 26 MT	25 M Feb T	Feb 24 MT	vs. 25	vs. 24
GR TEA NF OT (902209050)	366.6	498.6	237.3	-132.0	+129.3
ORG GR TEA NF OT (902209015)	94.0	89.1	21.6	+4.9	+72.4
FLAV GRN TEA NRT (902201000)	16.6	5.4	10.4	+11.2	+6.2
GR TEA NF<3K (902109050)	52.4	24.4	48.5	+28.0	+3.9
ORG GR TEA NF<3K (902109015)	56.7	13.2	14.3	+43.5	+42.4
GR TEA FL<3K (902101050)	16.1	19.3	11.7	-3.2	+4.4
ORG GR TEA FL<3K (902101015)	1.3	11.2	3.9	-9.9	-2.6
TOTAL CHINA GREEN	603.7	661.2	347.7	-57.5	+256.0

China green tea's YTD volume of 1,172.9 MT is 32.5% above the 2024 normalized baseline – a strong result. At the monthly level, the apparent 57.5 MT YoY decline vs. February 2025 reverses dramatically against 2024: February 2026 is 256.0 MT above February 2024 (+73.6%). The surge is broad-based but concentrated in organic subcategories (ORG GR TEA NF OT +72.4 MT vs. 2024; ORG GR TEA NF<3K +42.4 MT), and in the large non-fermented category (HS 902209050 +129.3 MT vs. 2024). China's YTD share of world green tea rose to 40.9% from 33.4% in 2024.

Normalized (vs. Feb 2024): China green tea is +73.6% for the month and +32.5% YTD – the strongest performing conventional category.

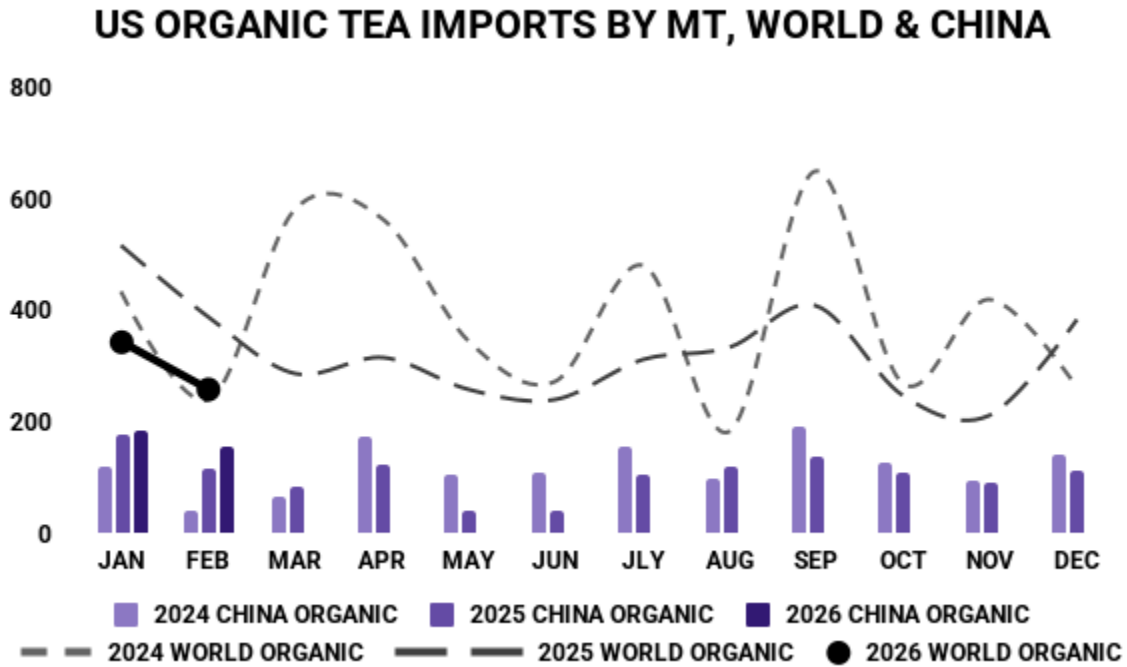
4. China Black Tea

Metric	Feb 2026	Feb 2025 (f-l)	Feb 2024 (norm.)	YoY vs. 25	vs. 24
China Black Vol. (MT) – Monthly	178.8	384.3	417.3	-53.5%	-57.1%
China Black Value – Monthly	\$755K	\$1,424K	\$1,528K	-47.0%	-50.6%
China Black Vol. (MT) – YTD	540.7	1,216.2	897.9	-55.6%	-39.7%
China Black % of World Black	2.7%	4.6%	6.2%	-1.9 pp	-3.5 pp

China black tea is the one category where the normalized comparison confirms genuine structural decline. February 2026's 178.8 MT is 57.1% below February 2024's 417.3 MT – a deterioration that cannot be attributed to front-loading base effects. China's share of world black tea imports has fallen from 6.2% to 2.7% on a YTD basis versus 2024. The fermented black tea category (HS 902400000) bears the brunt: 110.3 MT in February 2026 vs. 348.9 MT in February 2024, a 68.4% decline. On an annualized basis, this trajectory implies full-year 2026 China black tea well below 2,500 MT, versus the 6,162 MT recorded in 2024.

Black tea structural decline is confirmed: -57% vs. 2024 normalized baseline. This is not a base-effect artifact.

5. China Organic Tea



Metric	Feb 2026	Feb 2025	Feb 2024 (norm.)	YoY vs. 25	vs. 24
China Organic Vol. – Monthly (MT)	154.0	115.1	40.5	+33.8%	+280.2%
China Organic Vol. – YTD (MT)	337.4	290.4	157.6	+16.2%	+114.1%
World Organic YTD (MT)	599.5	901.6	673.4	-33.5%	-11.0%
China % of World Org. – YTD	56.3%	32.2%	23.4%	+24.1 pp	+32.9 pp

China organic continues its exceptional growth trajectory on all comparators. Monthly volume rose 33.8% versus February 2025 and an extraordinary 280.2% versus the normalized February 2024 baseline. YTD organic at 337.4 MT is 114.1% above the 2024 pace. China now accounts for 56.3% of all US organic tea imports YTD – up from 23.4% in early 2024 – driven by simultaneous strong China growth and sharp contraction in non-China organic supply (down 11.0% vs. 2024 YTD, and 33.5% vs. the front-loaded 2025 YTD).

China organic is the standout performer across all categories and both comparators: +33.8% YoY and +280.2% vs. 2024 normalized.

6. Notable Trends – Past 24 Months

Front-loading context (February edition): February 2025’s front-loading was real but less extreme than January (+36.7% vs. 2024 vs. +74.3% in January). As a result, February 2026 YoY comparisons are less distorted than January’s were, and the normalized picture is coming into clearer focus with each passing month.

China green tea momentum is genuine: +73.6% vs. normalized February 2024 and +32.5% YTD confirms this is not a base-effect rebound. Organic and large-format non-fermented green categories are both driving growth.

China black tea decline accelerating: The -57.1% monthly decline vs. 2024 is more severe than January’s -24.7% vs. 2024. On a YTD basis, China black is now -39.7% vs. 2024.

China organic is redefining the US organic tea market: A 56.3% YTD market share of world organic – up from 23.4% just two years ago – is a noticeable shift. Non-China organic supply into the US is contracting simultaneously.

Price normalization continues: The world average of \$5.35/kg and China average of \$5.87/kg in February 2026 are broadly in line with February 2024 levels (\$5.19/kg and \$6.23/kg).

Flavored green tea emerging: HS 902201000 reached 16.6 MT in February 2026, up from just 10.4 MT in February 2024. While still a small category, growth across both years suggests a potential shift worth monitoring.

7. Key Findings, Insights & Forecast

7.1 Overall Market Dynamics

The February data reinforce and extend the January findings. The US tea import market, when normalized against 2024 baselines, is performing at or above prior-year levels: world YTD +5.5%, China YTD -3.9%. The base-effect distortion from front-loading is gradually diminishing as more months accumulate, and should largely resolve by April–May 2026. The two structural themes to watch remain China black tea’s persistent decline and China organic’s extraordinary growth.

7.2 Tea Type Summary

Category	YTD 2026 MT	vs. YTD 2025	vs. YTD 2024 (norm.)	Assessment
China Green Tea	1,172.9	-26.9%	+32.5%	Genuine growth
China Black Tea	540.7	-55.6%	-39.7%	Structural decline
China Organic	337.4	+16.2%	+114.1%	Strong growth
China Total	1,713.6	-39.3%	-3.9%	Flat / stable
World Total	17,103.6	-15.7%	+5.5%	Stable / slight growth

7.3 Forecasting Models – Full Year 2026

Model	2026 China Proj. (MT)	2026 World Proj. (MT)	Confidence
Seasonal Share (Jan–Feb = ~15.4% of annual)	~11,100	~111,000	65%
Linear Trend, Normalized	~9,500–10,800	~108,000–118,000	55%
3-Year Moving Average	~11,097	~113,033	70%
Consensus Range	~9,500–11,100	~108,000–118,000	60–70%

The seasonal share model uses January–February’s historical 13.5–16% share of annual totals. With 2026 YTD China at 1,713.6 MT, applying a 15.4% share (2020–2024 average) yields ~11,100 MT. The consensus range narrows slightly from the January report as more data points accumulate. The primary risk remains: how deeply will the post-front-loading demand drawdown affect Q2–2026 imports, particularly in categories most aggressively front-loaded in early 2025.

7.4 Conclusion

February 2026 confirms the January thesis while adding important nuance. China green tea is a genuine growth story on normalized terms – not merely a rebound. China black tea’s decline is deepening and now clearly exceeds what base effects can explain. China organic is transforming the composition of US organic tea supply. World totals remain stable-to-growing versus 2024. As the front-loading base effect fades through Q2 2026, headline YoY comparisons will increasingly reflect these underlying dynamics.

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