

China Export & US Import Report*

Q1 2026 (January - March)
Report Date: May 5, 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND KEY HIGHLIGHTS

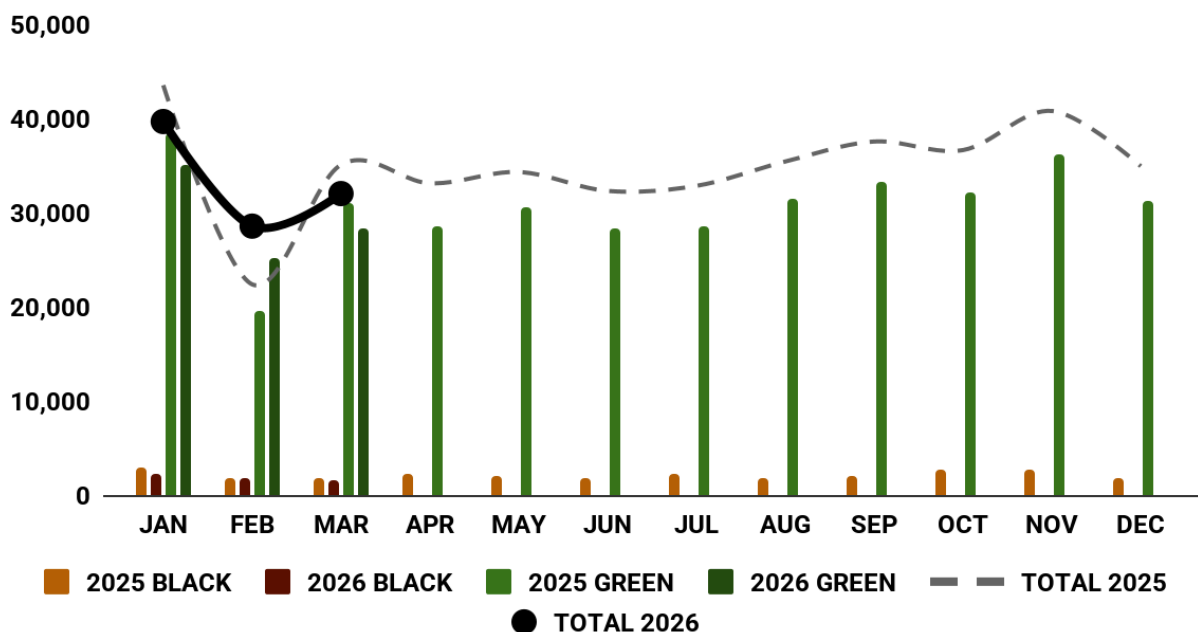
Q1 2026 showed essentially flat China export performance (-0.7%) at 100.2 million kg, with March declining 8.7% versus March 2025. US imports from China fell 14.5% in Q1. Export prices rose 8.2% to \$3.72/kg.

Key Highlights:

- China Q1 2026: 100.2M kg (-0.7%)
- March 2026: 32.0M kg (-8.7%)
- Green tea: 88.6M kg (-0.3%, 88.4% of total)
- Black tea: 5.7M kg (-11.1%, 5.6% of total)
- Price: \$3.72/kg (+8.2%)
- US imports from China: 2.6M kg (-14.5%)

1. CHINA EXPORTS

CHINA TEA EXPORT - METRIC TON



1.1 Total Exports Q1 2026 vs Q1 2025

| Q1 2026 | Q1 2025 | Change |
|-----------|-----------|------------------|
| 100.2M kg | 101.0M kg | -731K kg (-0.7%) |

Q1 performance essentially flat at -0.7%, with 100.2M kg exported. This follows a strong 2025 full year (+12.1%), suggesting normalization.

1.2 March 2026 vs March 2025

| March 2026 | March 2025 | Change |
|------------|------------|-------------------|
| 32.0M kg | 35.1M kg | -3056K kg (-8.7%) |

March declined 8.7%, following flat January-February. Seasonal patterns consistent with prior years.

1.3 Green Tea

| Q1 2026 | Q1 2025 | Change |
|----------|----------|------------------|
| 88.6M kg | 88.9M kg | -311K kg (-0.3%) |

Share of Total: 88.4%

Green tea nearly flat at -0.3%, maintaining 88.4% dominance. Volume stability despite price increases demonstrates strong demand.

1.4 Black Tea

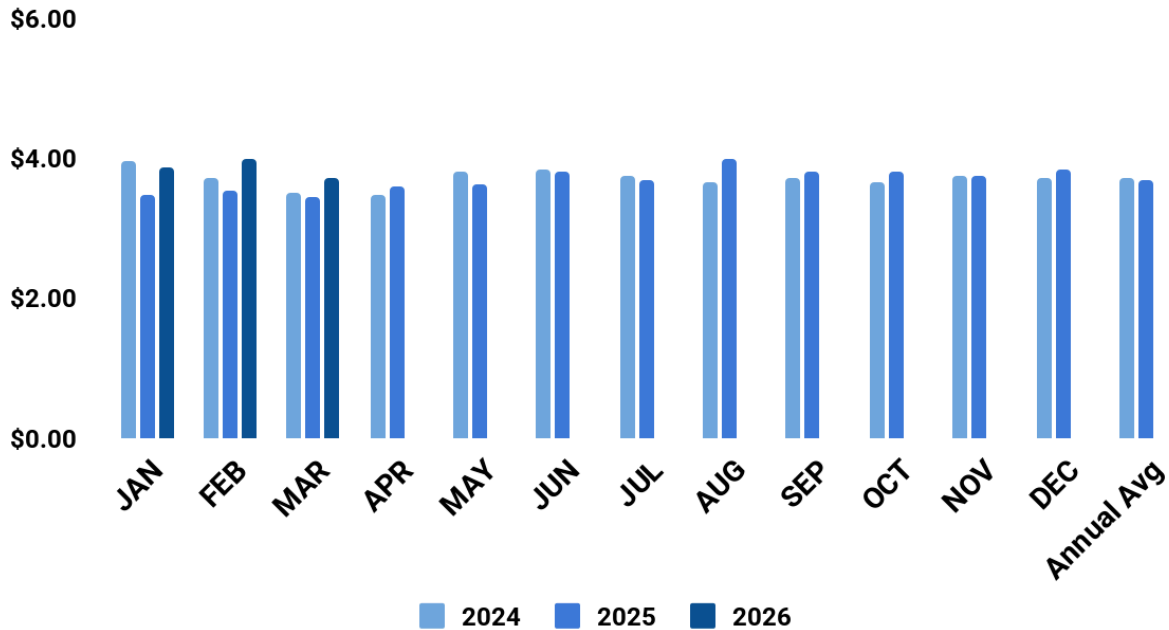
| Q1 2026 | Q1 2025 | Change |
|---------|---------|-------------------|
| 5.7M kg | 6.4M kg | -706K kg (-11.1%) |

Share of Total: 5.6%

Black tea declined. Category remains a smaller portion (5.6%) of overall exports.

1.5 Pricing

CHINA TEA AVERAGE EXPORT PRICES (\$/KG)



March 2026: \$3.72/kg | March 2025: \$3.44/kg | Change: +8.2%

1.6 24-Month Trends

- Volume stabilization after 2025 surge (+12.1%)
- Price recovery sustained: \$3.44 (Q1 2025) → \$3.72 (Q1 2026)
- Black tea weakness persists despite 2025 full-year recovery
- Jasmine tea +22.8% shows specialty strength

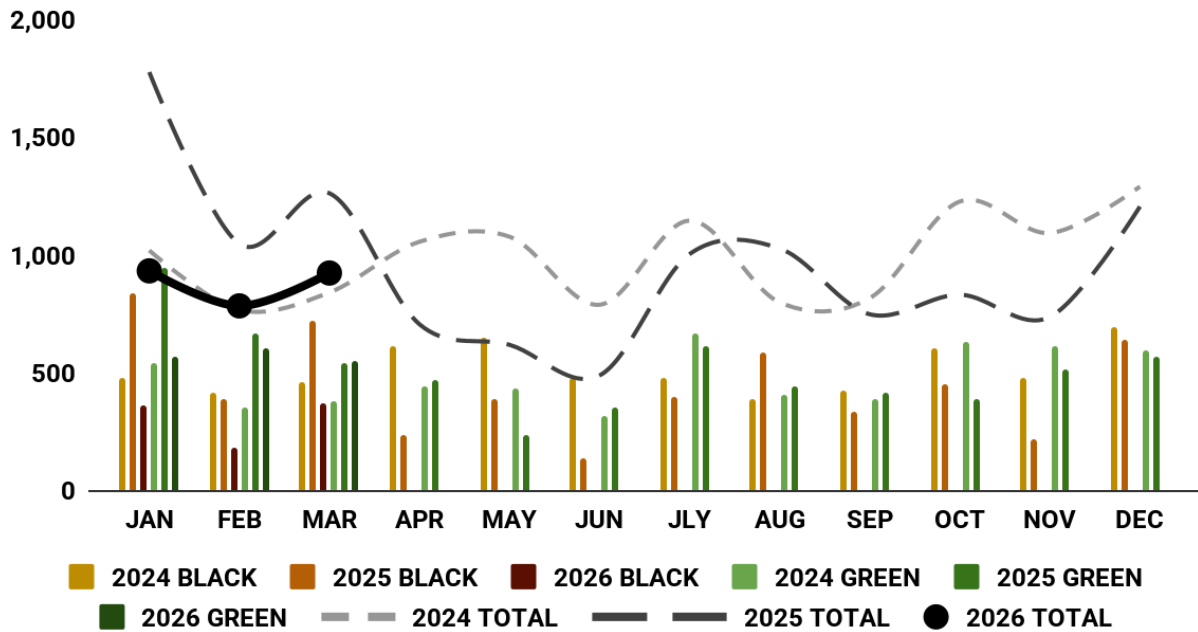
2. US IMPORTS

2.1 Total World Imports Q1 2026

| Q1 2026 | Q1 2025 | Change |
|----------|----------|------------------|
| 26.9K kg | 29.9K kg | -2.9K kg (-9.8%) |

US market contracted 9.8% in Q1, continuing 2025 weakness.

US TEA IMPORTS (HS 0902) FROM CHINA, METRIC TONS



2.2 China Green Tea

Q1 2026: 1.7K kg (-19.6% vs 2025)

China Share of US Green: 38.0%

China maintained a strong 38% share despite volume decline.

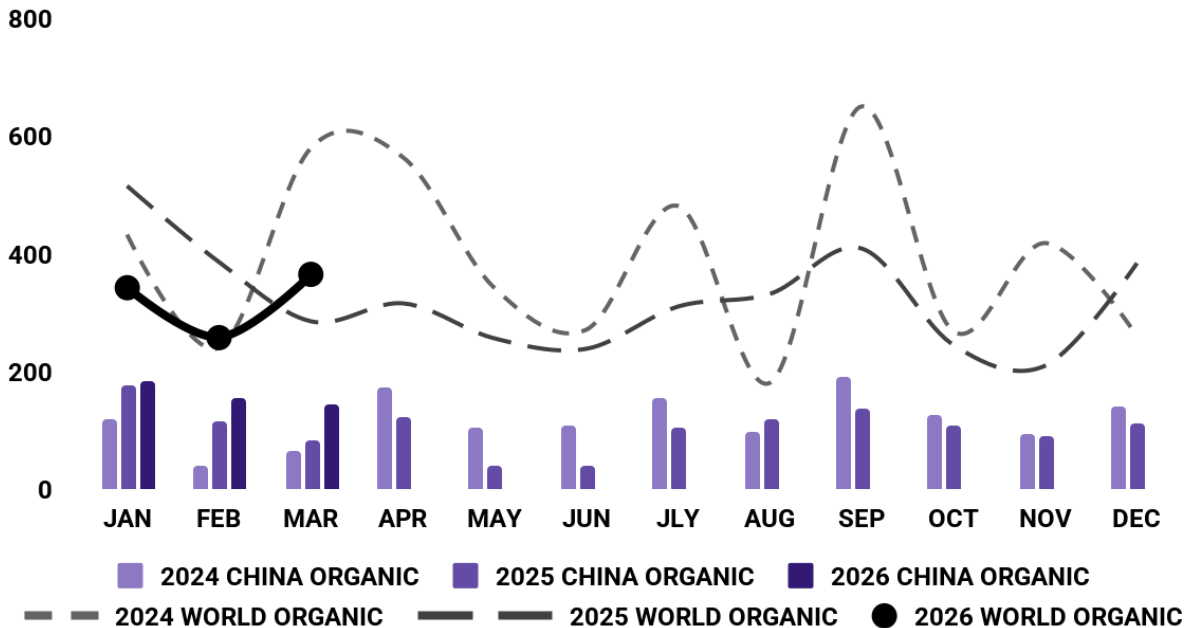
2.3 China Black Tea

Q1 2026: 0.9K kg (-52.9% vs 2025)

Black tea imports declined, mirroring export weakness.

2.4 China Organic Tea

US ORGANIC TEA IMPORTS BY MT, WORLD & CHINA



Q1 2026: 0.5K kg (29.1% vs 2025)
China Share of US Organic: 50.1%
 Exceptional 50% organic share.

2.5 24-Month Trends

- Persistent US market contraction: -9.2% (2025), -9.8% (Q1 2026)
- China maintaining market share despite volume pressures
- Organic segment strength (50% share) vs commodity weakness

3. KEY FINDINGS AND INSIGHTS

3.1 Overall Market Dynamics

China Export Performance:

China's Q1 2026 exports were essentially flat (-0.7% at 100.2M kg), representing consolidation after 2025's exceptional 12.1% full-year growth. The March decline of 8.7% reflects typical seasonal patterns following Chinese New Year inventory corrections. Export prices surged 8.2% to \$3.72/kg, indicating a potential rise in higher-value teas sold. Matcha comes to mind here.

US Import Performance:

The US tea import market contracted in Q1 2026, with total world imports declining 9.8%. US imports from China specifically fell 14.5% to 2.6M kg. However, China maintained strong market share positions: 38.0% of US green tea imports and an exceptional 50.1% of US organic tea imports.

Export-Import Disconnect:

China's flat export performance (-0.7%) versus steep US import decline from China (-14.5%) confirms successful geographic diversification. China is maintaining overall export volumes by expanding non-US markets (African, Central Asian, Middle Eastern).

3.2 Tea Type Trends

China Export Categories:

Green tea exports were nearly flat (-0.3% to 88.6M kg), maintaining 88.4% dominance of China's export mix. Jasmine tea showed exceptional 22.8% growth, indicating specialty category opportunity. The 88.4% green tea concentration creates portfolio risk—any green tea disruption would severely impact total export performance.

US Import Categories from China:

US green tea imports from China declined 19.6% but China maintained a strong 38.0% share of total US green tea imports, demonstrating competitive resilience. US organic tea imports from China declined 29.1%, yet China captured an exceptional 50.1% share of US organic imports—nearly half the market. This organic strength suggests US buyers value Chinese organic certification and quality despite overall volume reductions.

3.3 Emerging Patterns

China Exports:

Q1 typically accounts for 23-25% of annual China tea exports, with Q2 (April-June spring harvest) historically the strongest quarter at 27-30% of annual volume. March's 8.7% decline may reflect post-Chinese New Year inventory corrections and buyer hesitation ahead of spring harvest availability. Q2 performance will be critical—if spring harvest volumes recover, full year could exceed the 401.5M kg forecast.

US Imports:

US tea imports show less pronounced seasonality than China exports, but Q1 weakness (9.8% total market decline) may indicate inventory overhang from 2025 year-end or buyers awaiting spring harvest quality assessments before committing to larger purchases.

3.4 Conclusion

China Export Outlook:

Q1 2026 demonstrates healthy market consolidation after 2025's exceptional performance. Key positives: (1) Export price strength (+8.2%) indicates sustained global demand for Chinese tea, (2) Green tea volume stability (-0.3%) at premium prices shows category resilience, (3) Geographic diversification working—China maintains flat exports despite US market weakness.

US Import Outlook:

The US tea import market continues contracting, with Q1 2026 down 9.8% overall and down 14.5% for China specifically. However, China's market share resilience (38.0% of US green, 50.1% of US organic) demonstrates competitive strength. The steeper China import decline versus exports suggests: (1) US buyers shifting to other origins, or (2) Inventory drawdown.

Strategic Implications:

The export-import disconnect (China exports flat, US imports from China down 14.5%) confirms China's focus on non-US markets. African, Central Asian, and Middle Eastern expansion compensates for Western market softness. Q2 2026 spring harvest will be decisive—strong Q2 volumes could drive full-year exports above forecast, while continued weakness would validate the 401.5M kg projection. US import recovery unlikely near-term given persistent market contraction.

* This report was produced with the assistance of an AI agent. It was reviewed and edited by Firsd Tea, but may contain errors. Content is provided for informational purposes only. Please consult original data sources for verification.

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