Dual Art Deco sterling silver tea caddy with faux jade finial

S Blanckensee & Son

£2,450



REF: 9564

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Height: 110 mm (4.33")

Width: 100 mm (3.94")

Depth: 75 mm (2.95")

Weight: 299 g

Description

Irregular octagon-shaped Art Deco era silver tea caddy with two compartments either side of a central partition for separate teas. Each has a hinged gilded cover fitted with a detachable bun-shaped faux jade finial; one cover charmingly engraved India and the other China. The interiors are fully gilded. The caddy's hinged lid is slightly domed and surmounted by a lovely detachable faux jade finial. Overall a charming addition to any tea set.

Tea drinking in England became fashionable and hugely popular among the wealthy from the late 17th century. For most of the 18th century, import duties and the East India Company's monopoly on importing tea kept the price of tea artificially high making it a very expensive commodity. This in turn established the need for airtight, lockable tea canisters and chests, not only to preserve the tea's distinctive flavours, but to protect the precious contents.

Commensurate with the high value of the contents, tea caddies became treasured and valuable accessories in their own right often made in fine porcelain or silver, and invariably fitted with a key.

By the end of the 18th century tea canisters and chests were referred to as tea caddies. The word caddy is thought to derive from the Malay word "kati" which was a measure of tea weighing about one imperial pound.