

# Tea Brewing and Storage

<https://www.thefragrantleaf.com/basic-tea-brewing-and-storage>

Brewing the perfect cup of tea from loose leaves is simple and straightforward. There is no right or wrong way to make tea. Feel free to experiment and let your palate be the guide.



Here are some tips to brewing good tea:

## *Start with fresh, cold good-tasting water*

The best tea is only as good as the water with which it is prepared. We recommend using filtered or bottled spring water with a natural mineral content that is neither too hard nor too soft. Distilled water is not recommended since water purified of its mineral content produces a flat tasting infusion. The freshness of the water is important as fresh water contains more oxygen, which enhances the taste of the tea. Never use hot tap water or water that has already boiled for a long time as this will result in a flat and dull tasting tea with little aroma.

## *Preheat the teapot*

It is important to preheat the pot or cup in which the tea will be steeped. If hot water is poured into a cold vessel, the temperature of the water will drop too quickly and the full flavor of the tea will not be extracted. To preheat the pot: pour a little of the boiling water from the kettle into the pot and then pour this water off into the drinking cups to warm them.

## *Measure the appropriate amount of dry leaves*

Ideally, 3 grams of dry leaves should be used for every 6 ounces of water. Since you may not have a gram weight scale, we recommend starting with one rounded teaspoon of dry leaves for each 6-ounce cup. Since different teas have widely varying weights, it is important to adjust the amount of dry leaves accordingly. With lighter weight teas such as large, wiry oolongs and whites, try 2 teaspoons per 6 oz cup.

## *Select the right water temperature*

*Black, Dark Oolong, Herbal* - These types are best prepared with water that has come to near boiling. Don't let the water boil too long or the oxygen content will be reduced and the tea will taste flat.

*Green, White, Green Oolong* - These types should not be prepared with boiling water as this will cook the leaves and destroy their flavor. Japanese greens tend to taste best with water at 170-180° F. China green teas tend to taste best with water at 185° F. Generally, the finer the green tea, the lower the water temperature should be. To brew green tea without a thermometer: pour the water at the moment that bubbles begin to rise from the bottom of your kettle, or bring the water to a boil first and then let it cool for two to three minutes before pouring.

## *Steep for the proper length of time*

The time it takes for tea to brew depends on the leaf size. The smaller the leaf, the faster the tea infuses. Until familiar with a particular tea, steep for a minute or two, then taste. Pay attention to the taste rather than the color. When the tea tastes right, serve or pour off all the liquid to avoid oversteeping. Here are some general guidelines:

- Japanese Green Teas: 1-2 minutes
- Chinese Green Teas: 2-3 minutes
- White Teas: 2-5 minutes
- Green Oolong Teas: 2-3 minutes
- Dark Oolong Teas: 3-5 minutes
- Black Teas: 3-5 minutes
- Herbal Infusions: 5-10 minutes

Some green, oolong and white teas are good for multiple infusions. Just add fresh hot water to the pot and increase the steeping time slightly for each subsequent infusion. Repeat until the flavor starts to fade. Oolong vendors often have detailed suggestions for multiple steeps. Don't drink tea that is too hot, tea at a moderate temperature generally tastes better.

## **Storing Tea**

All tea has a shelf life. The enemies of tea are air, light, moisture and odors from other foods. To preserve its freshness as long as possible, tea should be stored in a cool and dry place, in a container that is opaque and airtight. An airtight tin is best. Avoid glass jars, as this exposes the tea to light. Since tea absorbs other odors very easily, it is important to store it away from any strong-smelling foods. We do not recommend that you refrigerate or freeze teas.