Green Plantation

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Tea Brewing Guide

Water temperatures, amounts and steeping times for every type of tea

The same tea can taste sweet or bitter. What decides is the water temperature, the amount of leaves and the steeping time. The table below is a starting point, then adjust it to your taste.

Brewing table (per 250 ml of water)

Type of tea	Amount	Water temperature	Steeping time	Further infusions
White tea	2–3 g (2 teaspoons)	75–85 °C	2–4 min	2–3×
Chinese green tea	2–3 g (1 teaspoon)	75–80 °C	2–3 min	2–3×
Japanese green tea (sencha)	2–3 g	70–80 °C	1–2 min	2–3×
Gyokuro	3–4 g	50–60 °C	2 min	2–3×
Matcha	1–2 g per 70 ml	70–80 °C	whisk for 15–20 s	–
Oolong	3–5 g	85–95 °C	2–4 min	3–5×
Black tea	2–3 g (1 teaspoon)	95–100 °C	3–5 min	1–2×
Pu-erh	3–5 g	95–100 °C	2–4 min (rinse for 10 s first)	4× or more
Rooibos and honeybush	2–3 g	100 °C	5–8 min	1–2×
Herbal tea (leaves, flowers)	2–3 g	100 °C	5–10 min	1×
Fruit tea	3–4 g	100 °C	8–10 min	1×
Mate	3–5 g	70–80 °C	3–5 min	3× or more

A teaspoon of loose tea weighs 1.5–3 g depending on the type. Measure bulky teas (white tea, some oolongs, herbs) with a heaped teaspoon, and rolled pellets (gunpowder, oolong) with a level one.

How to judge the temperature without a thermometer

- Bring the water to the boil and let it stand in the kettle with the lid open.
- After 2–3 minutes it is roughly 85–90 °C, after 5–6 minutes roughly 75–80 °C. It depends on the amount of water and the kettle material, so treat it as a guide.
- A quicker way: add cold water to boiling water. A ratio of 4 parts boiling to 1 part cold gives roughly 80 °C.
- Kettles with temperature control are the most convenient option for green and white tea.

Water makes half the flavour

- Use fresh, ideally filtered water. Very hard water forms a film on the tea and dulls the flavour.
- Do not boil water repeatedly. Reboiled water loses oxygen and the tea then tastes flatter.
- Warm the teapot or cup with hot water first, so the tea steeps evenly.

Most common mistakes

Problem	Cause	Solution
Green tea is bitter and astringent	water too hot or steeped too long	lower the temperature to 70–80 °C, shorten the time
Tea is weak and watery	too few leaves or too short a steep	add more leaves, not more time (long steeping adds bitterness)
Black tea is harsh	steeped for over 5 minutes	remove the leaves when the time is up
Herbal tea has no aroma	the water did not boil or there was no lid	pour boiling water and cover

Storage

- Keep tea dry, dark and in a closed container, away from spices and coffee, as it easily absorbs odours.
- Green and white teas are the most delicate; once opened, use them up ideally within a few months.
- Black teas, oolongs and herbal blends keep longer. Pu-erh can be stored for years, but it needs air and a stable temperature.

> Caffeine: black, green and white tea, oolong, pu-erh, matcha and mate contain caffeine. Rooibos, honeybush, fruit teas and most herbal teas are caffeine-free.

The values are a guide based on common tea brewing practice. For a specific tea, also follow the recommendation on the packaging.
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