Twinings Earl Grey

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Twinings Earl Grey, in summary:** The 200-year-old global benchmark: bergamot oil over Indian and Sri Lankan black tea. The cup, the history, the variants and the premium alternatives.

Last reviewed by the teas.co.uk team in January 2026.

Twinings Earl Grey is the brand's signature blend and one of the most recognisable teas in the world: strong British black tea infused with bergamot oil for a distinctive citrus-aromatic character. It is the classic afternoon-tea choice and the global benchmark for the style; many Earl Greys exist, but Twinings is the foundational one.

The product

A blend of Indian and Ceylon black tea with natural bergamot flavouring. Bergamot orange (Citrus bergamia), grown mainly in Calabria in southern Italy, is what makes Earl Grey Earl Grey: its oil gives the tea its floral-citrus aromatic. Twinings has the longest continuous claim to the blend, in the catalogue since the 1830s.

How it tastes

- **Aroma:** distinctive bergamot citrus.
- **First sip:** black tea body with citrus brightness.
- **Mid cup:** bergamot character carries through.
- **Finish:** a long citrus note.
- **With milk:** possible, but milk masks the bergamot.
- **With lemon:** excellent, and it amplifies the citrus.

Curator Rating: 4.9/5.

How to brew

1. 1 bag in 200ml just-boiled water.
2. Cover the cup; the bergamot aromatics are volatile.

3. Steep 3 minutes only; over-steeping turns it bitter.
4. Drink black, with lemon, or with a splash of milk.
5. For iced Earl Grey, brew double-strength then chill over ice.

The history

Earl Grey is traditionally named for Charles Grey, 2nd Earl Grey (British PM 1830 to 1834), though the origin is uncertain. The usual stories:

- A gift from a Chinese mandarin to the Earl.
- Blended to suit the Earl's palate.
- Created to mask the hard water at Howick Hall, the Earl's home.

The truth is unclear, but the blend has been in continuous production since the 19th century.

Variants

- **Earl Grey (standard):** the classic, mid-tier mainstream pricing.
- **Lady Grey:** lighter, with added citrus peel.
- **Twinings 1706 / Strong Earl Grey:** premium tier, more bergamot.
- **Decaf Earl Grey:** the caffeine-removed version of the standard.

Use cases

- Afternoon tea, with cucumber sandwiches, scones or lemon cake.
- A lighter, brighter alternative to English Breakfast for midday work.
- Hosting; it is almost universally liked.
- Tea cocktails (Earl Grey martini, bergamot-infused gin). More on tea cocktails.

How it compares

Against other UK Earl Greys: Yorkshire Tea's is fuller-bodied while Twinings is more refined and citrus-focused; Whittard sits a tier up; and specialist Earl Greys (teas.co.uk, with friends Mei Leaf and Postcard Teas) use higher-grade leaf and stronger bergamot at premium prices. The Twinings cup is the consistent benchmark rather than the most refined.

Pairings

- Lemon drizzle cake.
- Cucumber sandwiches.
- Plain or lemon shortbread.
- Scones.
- Madeira cake and light pastries.

FAQ

Best for afternoon tea? Yes, the classic.

Caffeine? Around 40mg per cup.

Milk? Possible, but it masks the bergamot.

Lemon? An excellent addition.

Premium variant? Twinings 1706 Earl Grey.

Curator's note: Twinings Earl Grey is the global benchmark for Earl Grey. Distinctive bergamot character; reliable quality. Worth keeping in the cupboard for afternoon tea. Lee, teas.co.uk, Tunbridge Wells.

Twinings Earl Grey at a glance

Field	Detail
Brand	Twinings (the historic Earl Grey originator; 1830s blend)
Format	Standard square teabag, pyramid loose-leaf, and tinned loose-leaf available
Blend	Black tea base with bergamot oil flavouring (the defining Earl Grey ingredient)
Cup character	Bright citrus-floral bergamot over light black tea base; takes milk OK but better without
Caffeine	Moderate; 30-45mg per cup (similar to English Breakfast)
UK availability	Every UK supermarket, every convenience store, hotel breakfast trays globally
UK price	£2.20 to £3.00 for 50 bags (4-6p per cup)

What to buy now

Buy Twinings Earl Grey as the everyday benchmark. For a step up, Twinings Lady Grey adds citrus peel and is gentler, Twinings Strong Earl Grey uses more bergamot for a punchier cup, and Fortnum & Mason Earl Grey is the premium specialist version. Teapigs Earl Grey is the whole-leaf pyramid alternative. The relevant aisle is the Earl Grey range and the wider Twinings range.

FROM THE CURATOR

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Earl Grey reading

For the style itself see the Earl Grey tea primary guide and the Lady Grey tea overview; for brand background see the Twinings deep dive.

Reference noted

- EFSA Scientific Opinion on the Safety of Caffeine (2015)

The bottom line

Twinings Earl Grey is the world's most-recognised Earl Grey: a 200-year-old blend of bergamot oil over an Indian and Sri Lankan black-tea base, consistent across global distribution. The cup is the benchmark rather than the most refined; specialist and premium brands deliver finer bergamot oils and higher-grade bases at higher prices and lower availability. For everyday drinking, Twinings remains the practical choice; for occasion cups, the premium alternatives are worth exploring.

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