Valerian Tea: Flavour, Blends and Brewing

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Valerian, in summary:** A traditional herb used in evening and sleep blends, with a distinctive earthy, musky flavour usually softened with chamomile and lavender. Found in most UK sleep teas. What it is, how it tastes, which teas use it, and how to brew it below.

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

Valerian root is the herb most associated with evening wind-down, long used in sleep blends. It has a distinctive earthy, musky flavour that some find unpleasant, so it is usually blended with chamomile and lavender to soften it. You will find it in most UK sleep teas (Pukka Night Time, Twinings Sleep, Clipper Snore & Peace).

What is valerian

Valeriana officinalis is a flowering plant native to Europe and Asia. The root and rhizome are dried for use in tea or supplements. It is the root, not the flower, that carries valerian's characteristic aroma.

The taste problem

Valerian root has a distinctive earthy, musky flavour that:

- many drinkers find unpleasant;
- cannot be masked entirely;
- is usually combined with chamomile, lavender or fruit notes to soften it;
- becomes stronger the longer it steeps.

UK valerian tea options

Pure valerian (rare)

Some specialty retailers offer pure valerian tea bags.

Valerian-led blends

- Pukka Night Time (oat flower, lavender and valerian).

- Twinings Sleep with Valerian.
- Heath & Heather Night Time.
- Clipper Snore & Peace (chamomile and valerian).
- Yogi Bedtime Tea.

How to brew

1. 1 bag in 200ml just-boiled water.
2. Cover the cup and steep 7-10 minutes; valerian root is slow to give up its character.
3. Drink 30-60 minutes before bed.

Caffeine

None. Valerian is naturally caffeine free.

Pregnancy and children

Valerian is best avoided in pregnancy and while breastfeeding, and is not recommended for children under 12. A plain chamomile blend is the gentler evening option if any of these apply.

Good to know

It is sensible not to combine valerian with prescription sleep medication, other sedatives, or a lot of alcohol on the same night, as the combination can leave you groggy in the morning. Check with your GP if you take regular medication.

FAQ

Does it work? It is a traditional evening wind-down herb; the effect is mild and it suits regular nightly use rather than a single cup.

Caffeine? None.

Pregnancy? Best avoided.

On medication? Check with your GP before using it regularly.

Best UK option? Pukka Night Time or Twinings Sleep with Valerian.

The essentials: Valerian root tea

Field	Detail
Botanical name	Valeriana officinalis (the European species used in herbal blends)
Part used	Root and rhizome, dried and chopped or cut for tea
Aroma	Earthy, musty, slightly cheese-like volatile oils give it the characteristic note
Cup character	Earthy, musty, slightly cheese-like; an acquired taste

Field	Detail
Best for	Evening wind-down; a traditional sleep-blend herb
Caffeine	0mg, naturally caffeine-free
Tradition	Long used in European herbal sleep and wind-down blends
UK availability	Twinings Sleep Valerian, Pukka Night Time, Yogi Bedtime, Holland & Barrett straight valerian root
UK price	Approximately £3.50 to £6.00 per 20-bag pack for blends; £4-£8 per 50g loose root

How to brew valerian well

Brew at full boil for 7-10 minutes; valerian root is slow-extracting, so a quick brew leaves most of its character behind. Cover the cup to keep the aromatics in. For loose root, use a teaspoon of dried root per cup and simmer it gently in a saucepan for 8-10 minutes rather than just steeping, then strain, the simmer draws far more out of the woody root. Sweeten lightly with honey if you want to soften the earthy note. Drink 30-60 minutes before bed, and give it a week or two of regular evening use rather than judging it on the first cup.

Curator's note: valerian is one of the better evidenced sleep supportive herbs. Distinctive flavour but real effect. Worth keeping a valerian based sleep blend for difficult sleep nights. Lee, teas.co.uk, Tunbridge Wells.

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · A pot of good valerian root, brewed properly, beats five novelty sleep bags drunk in a hurry.

Sleep-tea reading

For ingredient context see the passionflower guide, the chamomile guide, and the lavender guide. For the products that use valerian see the Twinings sleep blends and the Pukka Night Time review.

The bottom line on valerian

Valerian is the herb at the heart of most UK sleep blends, with the trade-off of an earthy taste that takes some getting used to. Worth a try if you want a traditional evening wind-down cup, ideally as a nightly habit rather than a one-off. Skip it if you cannot get on with the taste, are on prescription sleep medication, or are pregnant.

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