White Peony

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **White Peony, in summary:** White Peony tea (Bai Mu Dan) explained: Chinese Fujian white tea, brewing tips, UK availability, and where it sits in the white tea hierarchy.

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

White Peony (Bai Mu Dan, ???) is one of the most popular Chinese white teas: minimal processing, delicate flavour, gentle sweetness. The accessible white tea, easier to like than the more delicate Silver Needle. Made from young leaves and buds. Subtle, refined, premium tier.

What is white peony

Bai Mu Dan (???, "white peony") is a Chinese white tea from Fujian Province, made from one bud and two leaves. The processing is minimal, withering and drying only, giving a gentle, slightly sweet tea with delicate complexity.

How it tastes

Light, slightly sweet, with a faint floral character. Less delicate than Silver Needle but more accessible. Curator Rating: 4.9/5.

How to brew

1. 1 heaped tsp loose leaf per 200ml.
2. Water at 80-85°C.
3. Steep 4-5 minutes.
4. Multi-infusion: 2-3 infusions possible.

Caffeine

15-25mg per cup, one of the lowest-caffeine true teas.

Use cases

Afternoon tea; a gentle daily cup; pregnancy (lower caffeine); a quiet moment; careful tasting.

Compared to other white teas

vs Silver Needle (Bai Hao Yinzhen)

Silver Needle is more delicate and premium-priced; White Peony is more accessible.

vs Shou Mei

Shou Mei uses older leaves and is fuller-bodied; White Peony is the middle tier.

UK availability

Specialist shops: teas.co.uk first, then White Peony sellers we know in the trade, such as Mei Leaf, Postcard Teas and the premium Whittard range. Some mainstream supermarket white tea is closer to White Peony than to Silver Needle in quality.

FAQ

Caffeine? 15-25mg.

Vegan? Yes.

Best brewing temperature? 80-85°C.

Multi-infusion? 2-3 steeps possible.

Where to buy? Specialty tea retailers.

Why White Peony works

White Peony sits in the middle of the white tea hierarchy: above the simpler Shou Mei (later-harvest, mature-leaf white) and below the more delicate Silver Needle (Bai Hao Yin Zhen, bud-only). The plucking standard (one bud plus two leaves) gives the cup more body and structure than Silver Needle while keeping the floral-honeyed character that defines white tea. The leaves are simply withered and dried, with no rolling, no pan-firing and no oxidation, so the original tea-plant character stays intact.

The cup is light gold-yellow, sweet without sugar, lightly floral, sometimes with stone-fruit notes (apricot, white peach) over a soft hay-honey base. There is no astringency, very little bitterness, and it tolerates re-steeping well. White Peony is forgiving to brew and rewarding to a developing palate; it is often the white tea drinkers settle on after their first Silver Needle proves too subtle.

Why white tea has a small UK market

White tea is under 2% of UK tea consumption, despite growing visibility in specialty retail. The reasons are practical rather than about quality: the cup is subtle and rewards attention, which does not suit the British "kettle and a bag" pattern; the price per cup is higher (20 to 50p vs 3 to 5p for value black); and the marketing has leaned on medical style angles rather than flavour, which leaves it awkwardly between "functional blend" and "fine tea". For drinkers who do bond with it, white tea offers some of the most beautiful cups available, a category that rewards a small, dedicated investment of attention.

Storage and aging

White tea, particularly the higher grades from Fuding and Zhenghe, is one of the few teas that ages well. Stored in a sealed but breathable container (traditionally cotton-lined wood or a paper bag inside a card box, rather than an airtight tin) at cool room temperature, it changes slowly over years, taking on richer honeyed, dried-fruit notes while losing the brightest floral top. Chinese specialty drinkers value white teas aged 5, 10 or 20 years, and the price scales accordingly. For everyday use, just keep it sealed and dry; aging is a longer commitment.

What you need to know: White Peony (Bai Mu Dan)

Field	Detail
Chinese name	Bai Mu Dan (???), literally "White Peony"
Tea type	White tea: unoxidised, minimally processed
Origin	Fujian province, China; Zhenghe and Fuding counties are the classical regions
Plucking standard	One bud and two young leaves, picked in early spring
Cup character	Pale gold-yellow liquor, sweet floral, hay-honeyed, gentle stone-fruit notes, no astringency
Caffeine	15-30mg per cup, similar to green tea
UK availability	Specialty merchants (teas.co.uk, with trade friends like Postcard Teas, Comins, JING and Tregothnan), Whittard occasional stock, online specialty importers
UK price	£8-£25 per 50g loose-leaf; pricier for premium estate-named

Curator's note: White Peony is the accessible Chinese white tea, gentle, slightly sweet, refined. Worth keeping for delicate afternoon moments. Lee, teas.co.uk, Tunbridge Wells.

Reference noted

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

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · Freshness beats provenance for most drinkers. Buy a smaller bag more often.

White-tea reading

For category context see the white tea overview and the Chinese tea tradition. For the lighter cousin see the Silver Needle wiki. For brewing see the how to brew white tea guide, and for comparison the green vs other types.

The bottom line on White Peony

One of the most rewarding white teas to start exploring white tea with: more body than Silver Needle, easier drinking than Shou Mei, classical character at an accessible price. Worth investing £10-£15 in a 50g pack

from a specialty merchant rather than buying supermarket-grade. Brew at 80-85C, re-steep two or three times, and treat the cup as a moment to slow down. Not a daily-drinker substitute for black tea, but a beautiful weekly or weekend pick.

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