Tea for Sleep and Relaxation

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Tea for sleep and unwinding, in short:** a warm, caffeine-free cup before bed genuinely helps you wind down, mostly through ritual and by replacing caffeine. Chamomile and valerian have modest evidence. For daytime focus without the jitters, the L-theanine in green tea is the one with real backing.

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

Tea is a brilliant wind-down ritual and a sensible swap for evening caffeine, which is most of what helps with sleep. Be realistic, though: no tea is a strong sedative. The clearest evidence is for L-theanine, the amino acid in green tea, which supports relaxed, steady focus.

What tea can and can't do

The two biggest sleep wins are simple: a consistent pre-bed routine, and not drinking caffeine late in the day. A warm herbal cup delivers both. Chamomile and valerian are traditional sleep herbs with modest evidence, gentle rather than knock-out. Good sleep habits matter more than any single cup. See the NHS guide to insomnia.

For sleep

Chamomile, valerian, lavender and lemon balm are the classic bedtime herbs. They help you wind down and are caffeine-free. See tea for sleep for the detail, plus Wikipedia: chamomile and Wikipedia: valerian.

For stress and anxiety

Chamomile and lemon balm soothe, and the simple act of making and sipping a warm drink is genuinely settling. Caffeine, on the other hand, can fuel anxiety and jitters, so favour caffeine-free blends if you run anxious. See tea for anxiety and stress.

For unhurried focus

This is the strongest evidence of the three. L-theanine, the amino acid in green tea and matcha, pairs with caffeine to give steady alertness with less of the jittery edge of coffee. See tea for focus and Wikipedia: theanine.

Caffeine is the lever

If you want better sleep, the single most useful move is to stop caffeinated tea and coffee several hours before bed, and switch to caffeine-free herbals in the evening.

At a glance

Goal	Cup
Wind down for sleep	Chamomile, valerian, lavender (caffeine-free)
Relaxation and anxiety	Chamomile, lemon balm; avoid caffeine
Settled focus (daytime)	Green tea / matcha (L-theanine + caffeine)

FAQ

Does tea actually help you sleep? Mostly through ritual and by replacing evening caffeine; chamomile and valerian add a mild, gentle effect.

Best tea before bed? A caffeine-free herbal such as chamomile.

What about focus? Green tea, for the L-theanine and caffeine combination.

Can tea replace treatment for anxiety or insomnia? No. It is a supportive ritual, not a treatment.

This is general information, not medical or mental-health advice. If anxiety, low mood or sleep problems are affecting your life, talk to your GP. For urgent support, the Samaritans are on 116 123.

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · Per-cup price is the only price that matters. Loose leaf usually wins; supermarket bags sometimes do too.

Sources

- NHS: insomnia
- Wikipedia: chamomile
- Wikipedia: valerian
- Wikipedia: theanine

Sleep & relaxation guides

- Tea for sleep
- Tea for anxiety and stress
- Tea for focus

Related reading

- Chamomile tea
- Green tea
- Herbal tea overview
- Caffeine-free teas

Shop the cupboard: chamomile, green tea, the herbal & fruit range, or the full tea shop (free UK postage over £35).

More from the tea wiki

- Green tea
- Black tea
- Oolong tea
- White tea
- Herbal tea
- Caffeine in tea
- How to make tea properly
- Loose leaf vs teabag

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