

How to Brew White Tea Properly

From the Teas.co.uk wiki

How to brew white tea, in summary: White tea is delicate but not weak: use more leaf than you think, water off the boil, and a longer gentle steep. Silver Needle vs White Peony, no milk.

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for How to Brew White Tea Properly. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/how-to-brew-white-tea/>*

White tea is barely processed and barely forgiving. Done right it is soft, sweet and floral; done wrong it is watery or harsh. The [white tea guide](#) covers the styles; this is how to brew it.

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

Water temperature

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Water temperature, How to Brew White Tea Properly. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/how-to-brew-white-tea/>*

Cool for tea: around 75 to 85C. White tea is the most heat-sensitive common tea, and boiling water strips its delicate sweetness and pushes out astringency. Boil the kettle, then let it stand a few minutes before pouring.

Use more leaf, not more heat

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Use more leaf, not more heat, How to Brew White Tea Properly. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/how-to-brew-white-tea/>*

The instinct when white tea tastes weak is hotter water. Wrong: use more leaf instead. White tea leaves are fluffy and light, so a portion that looks generous is about right. Strength comes from leaf quantity and time, not from scorching it. Weigh the leaf once rather than guessing; the eye consistently under-pours a fluffy, low-density tea.

Steep longer than you expect

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Steep longer than you expect, How to Brew White Tea Properly. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/how-to-brew-white-tea/>*

Because the water is cool, white tea needs time, often three to five minutes, sometimes more for whole-bud teas like Silver Needle. It draws out slowly and gently. Re-steep it too: good white tea gives two or three soft infusions.

Silver Needle vs White Peony

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Silver Needle vs White Peony, How to Brew White Tea Properly. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/how-to-brew-white-tea/>*

Silver Needle (buds only) is the most delicate and wants the coolest water and the most patience. White Peony (bud and leaf) is a little more robust and forgiving. Match the care to the grade, see the [Silver Needle guide](#).

No milk, no rush

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for No milk, no rush, How to Brew White Tea Properly. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/how-to-brew-white-tea/>*

Never milk. White tea is a slow, clean, contemplative cup. It is the worst tea to make in a hurry and one of the best to make when you are not.

The vessel and the heat it holds

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for The vessel and the heat it holds, How to Brew White Tea Properly. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/how-to-brew-white-tea/>*

The cup or pot you use changes the result more than people expect. A thin cup sheds heat fast and under-extracts, so the tea comes out weaker than the same leaf brewed in a warmed pot or a heavier mug that holds temperature through the steep. Pre-warm the pot with a little hot water and discard it before adding the leaf, so the brewing temperature is stable from the first second rather than robbed by a cold pot. Covering the cup or pot while it steeps keeps both the heat and the volatile aromatics in, which is the single cheapest upgrade for any delicate white tea.

Storing white tea

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Storing white tea, How to Brew White Tea Properly. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/how-to-brew-white-tea/>*

Even perfect technique cannot rescue stale leaf, and a lot of disappointing white tea is simply old white tea. Air, light, heat, moisture and strong smells degrade it, so keep it airtight, opaque, cool and dry, away from coffee and spices, and buy amounts you will finish within a few months. Delicate styles fade faster than robust ones. A fresh, well-stored cheap white tea routinely beats an expensive one that has sat open since last year.

Common mistakes

Boiling water; too little leaf; too short a steep; expecting black tea strength. Each fault has a single obvious lever, so change one variable at a time. White tea is quiet by nature, brew it to be soft and sweet, not strong.

Brewing white tea, at a glance

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Dial	Rule
Water	~80-85C, off the boil; not boiling
Leaf	More than you think, white tea is fluffy and low-density
Time	Longer than expected: 3-5 min, it is gentle
Type	Silver Needle delicate; White Peony fuller, more forgiving
Milk	No; the subtlety is the point

Reference noted

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- [EFSA Scientific Opinion on the Safety of Caffeine \(2015\)](#)

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Tea reading

- [White tea](#)
- [How to make tea](#)
- [Ideal water temperatures](#)
- [Silver Needle](#)

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