How to Brew Chamomile Tea Properly

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **How to brew chamomile tea, in summary:** Chamomile is a delicate flower of volatile oil: full boiling water, a long covered steep, whole flowers not dust. The one allergy caution, no milk.

Most disappointing chamomile is just under-brewed chamomile. The chamomile guide covers what it does; this is how to brew it so it can.

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

Boiling water

Full boil. Chamomile is a flower infusion with no caffeine or tannin to turn bitter, so it needs heat to extract the apigenin and aromatic oils that give it its soft, flavourful character.

Cover it, and steep long

Cover the cup and steep five to ten minutes, longer is fine. Covering keeps the volatile oils in the cup; a long steep gets a proper dose. A pale, two-minute, uncovered chamomile is barely chamomile, which is why people say it does nothing.

Whole flowers beat dust

Loose whole chamomile flowers give a rounder, sweeter, honeyed cup than fine dust-grade bags. If chamomile has only ever tasted like warm hay to you, try whole-flower chamomile brewed strong and covered, it is a different drink.

For sleep specifically

If you are using it to wind down (see best tea for sleep and tea for sleep and relaxation), brew it strong, covered, 30 to 60 minutes before bed, as part of a routine rather than a one-off.

One caution

Chamomile is in the ragweed and daisy family; if you are allergic to those, be careful, see the chamomile guide.

Storing chamomile

No amount of careful brewing rescues stale leaf, and plenty of disappointing chamomile is simply old chamomile. 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. A fresh, well-stored cheap chamomile routinely beats an expensive one that has sat open since last year.

German vs Egyptian chamomile

German and Egyptian chamomile differ a little, Egyptian flower is often regarded as sweeter and more aromatic, but the brewing rule is identical for both. Which variety you pick matters far less than buying whole flower heads rather than dust, so treat the choice as a flavour preference and not a method change.

Common mistakes

Weak water, no lid, two-minute steep, dust-grade bags. Boiling water, covered, long steep, whole flowers, and chamomile finally tastes and works the way it is supposed to.

Brewing chamomile, at a glance

Dial	Rule
Water	Full boiling water
Cover it	Cover the cup, traps the volatile oils that carry the aroma
Time	Long, 5-10 min; no bitterness penalty
Form	Whole flowers beat dusty bags by a wide margin
Caution	A daisy or ragweed allergy is a real reason to avoid it

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