

# Gongfu Brewing at Home: The Practical Method

From the Teas.co.uk wiki

**Gongfu brewing at home, in summary:** The high-leaf, short-steep method that transforms good loose leaf: ratio, step by step, water, reading the infusions and the four common mistakes.

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for Gongfu Brewing at Home: The Practical Method. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/gongfu-brewing-at-home/>*

Of all the world's tea rituals, gongfu is the one that pays off fastest at home, because it is less about ceremony and more about a technique that genuinely transforms good loose leaf. This is the practical how-to companion to [the Chinese gongfu ceremony](#), within the [world ceremonies cluster](#).

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

## What you actually need

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for What you actually need, Gongfu Brewing at Home: The Practical Method. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/gongfu-brewing-at-home/>*

Ideally a gaiwan or a small (100 to 150 ml) teapot, a small jug to decant into, and a couple of small cups. Realistically, a small teapot or even a sturdy mug with a way to strain, plus a timer, gets you most of the way. The defining variables are a high leaf-to-water ratio and very short, repeated steeps, not the specific vessels.

## The ratio

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for The ratio, Gongfu Brewing at Home: The Practical Method. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/gongfu-brewing-at-home/>*

Use far more leaf than Western brewing: roughly five to eight grams for a 100 to 150 ml vessel, which looks like a lot. This high ratio is what makes the very short steeps work and is the single biggest change from normal brewing. Pair it with the right tea, a rolled oolong or a pu-erh are ideal, see [how to brew oolong](#) and [how to brew pu-erh](#).

## The method, step by step

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for The method, step by step, Gongfu Brewing at Home: The Practical Method. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/gongfu-brewing-at-home/>*

Warm the vessel with hot water and discard it. Add the leaf. For pu-erh and tightly rolled oolong, do a quick rinse, pour water on and straight off after a few seconds, and discard, to wake the leaf. Then brew the first real infusion very short, around ten to twenty seconds, and pour off completely into the jug, then into cups. Add roughly five to ten seconds to each subsequent infusion. Good leaf gives six to a dozen infusions, evolving each time.

## Water temperature

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Water temperature, Gongfu Brewing at Home: The Practical Method. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/gongfu-brewing-at-home/>*

Match it to the tea as always: near boiling for pu-erh, dark oolong and black; a touch cooler for green oolong and green tea, the principle in the [water temperature guide](#). Because steeps are so short, you can run slightly hotter than Western brewing without bitterness, since you control extraction by time, not by under-heating.

## Reading the infusions

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Reading the infusions, Gongfu Brewing at Home: The Practical Method. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/gongfu-brewing-at-home/>*

The pleasure of gongfu is watching a tea change: the first infusions bright and high, the middle ones deepest and most complex, the later ones soft and sweet. Drink attentively and you learn a single tea more thoroughly in one session than in months of mugs, which is exactly the connoisseur point of [the ceremony](#).

## Common mistakes

Too little leaf, the commonest error, gives weak tea and few infusions. Steeping too long out of Western habit gives bitterness the method is designed to avoid. Not pouring off completely leaves the next infusion stewing. Skipping the rinse on pu-erh and rolled oolong gives a muddy first cup. Each has one fix, and the whole approach rewards the attention the [ceremonies cluster](#) keeps advocating.

## The fixes for the four common mistakes

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for Gongfu Brewing at Home: The Practical Method. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/gongfu-brewing-at-home/>*

**Mistake**

**Result**

**Fix**

Too little leaf	weak tea, few infusions	use the full 5-8g, it should look like a lot
Western length steep	bitterness the method avoids	seconds, not minutes; add 5-10s each round
Not pouring off fully	next infusion stews	decant completely into the jug every time
Skipping the rinse	muddy first cup	quick rinse on pu-erh and rolled oolong

## Reference noted

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Reference noted, Gongfu Brewing at Home: The Practical Method. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/gongfu-brewing-at-home/>*

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

**FROM THE CURATOR** *teas* · One good loose-leaf in a clean teapot beats five exotic bags drunk in a hurry.

## Tea reading

- [The Chinese gongfu ceremony](#)
- [How to brew oolong](#)
- [How to brew pu-erh](#)
- [Oolong guide](#)
- [Tea ceremonies around the world](#)

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for Gongfu Brewing at Home: The Practical Method. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/gongfu-brewing-at-home/>*

## 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](#)

## Earn rewards on Teas.co.uk

Earn loyalty points on every order. Free to join.

**+100 pts**

**Create your free account**

Welcome bonus + earn on every order.



**100 pts = 1 tree**

**Plant a tree in Scotland**

Pledge points to our reforestation partner.



Teas.co.uk · Tunbridge Wells, Kent · [hello@teas.co.uk](mailto:hello@teas.co.uk) · 3-click cancel at [teas.co.uk/cancel/](https://teas.co.uk/cancel/)