

# Teaware Essentials: What You Actually Need

From the Teas.co.uk wiki

**Teaware essentials, in summary:** Tea equipment essentials explained: kettle, mug, strainer, teapot, variable-temperature kettle. What's essential, what's optional, what's waste.

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for Teaware Essentials: What You Actually Need. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/teaware-essentials/>*

Tea is sold as a hobby with an equipment list as long as your arm, and almost none of it is necessary. This page is the minimum: what genuinely improves the cup, what is a pleasant optional, and what is money better spent on better leaf. It is the anchor of our teaware cluster, alongside [how to choose a teapot](#) and [loose leaf vs tea bags](#).

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

## The genuine essentials

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for The genuine essentials, Teaware Essentials: What You Actually Need. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/teaware-essentials/>*

Three things cover almost everything. A way to hold near boiling water (your kettle, ideally one you can let go off the boil for green tea, see the [water temperature guide](#)). A way to give loose leaf room and then separate it from the liquor, a roomy infuser basket, a teapot, or a simple reusable strainer like the bamboo ones we stock. And a cup. That is it. Everything beyond this is refinement, not requirement.

## The high value optionals

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for The high value optionals, Teaware Essentials: What You Actually Need. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/teaware-essentials/>*

A teapot that holds heat and gives leaf room genuinely improves multi cup brewing, see [how to choose a teapot](#). A [gaiwan](#) or small pot unlocks [gongfu brewing](#), which transforms good loose leaf. For matcha, a sieve and a whisk are close to essential, see [the matcha kit](#) and [how to whisk matcha](#). These earn their place if you drink those teas; they are dead weight if you do not.

## What is mostly a waste

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for What is mostly a waste, Teaware Essentials: What You Actually Need. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/teaware-essentials/*

Single tea novelty gadgets, elaborate "tea makers", and anything that solves a problem a strainer already solves are usually money better spent on better leaf. The rule from the [loose leaf guide](#): the biggest upgrade is almost always the tea and the brewing, not another device.

## The strainer is the unsung hero

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for The strainer is the unsung hero, Teaware Essentials: What You Actually Need. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/teaware-essentials/*

If you buy one thing to move from bags to loose leaf, make it a good reusable strainer, the quiet enabler behind most of this wiki's brewing advice. The handmade bamboo strainers from [Tunta](#) are exactly this: simple, durable, and the single tool that makes loose leaf practical day to day. Avoid the gimmicky formats (silicone novelty infusers, spring-loaded tea balls): they look fun but do not give the leaves room to unfurl. A simple mesh strainer or a basket that fits your mug is what works.

## Variable-temperature kettles

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Variable-temperature kettles, Teaware Essentials: What You Actually Need. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/teaware-essentials/*

Standard kettles boil to 100C and stop; variable-temperature kettles let you select a lower temperature, which matters for green and white tea (they want roughly 70 to 85C, and a full boil makes them bitter). It removes the guesswork of waiting for boiled water to cool. For a drinker who mostly has black tea at full boil it is a luxury rather than a necessity; for anyone exploring green, white or delicate Chinese teas the modest outlay is justified.

## Teapot material choice

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Teapot material choice, Teaware Essentials: What You Actually Need. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/teaware-essentials/*

Material affects the cup more than most expect. Glass looks attractive but cools quickly; stainless steel holds heat well but can faintly interfere with delicate teas; cast iron (tetsubin) holds heat exceptionally and adds a faint mineral note, but is heavy and dear. Porcelain and bone china strike the useful balance, enough heat retention, thin walls that do not over-cool the cup, no flavour interference, usually dishwasher-safe, which is why a porcelain pot around £15 to £30 is the right pick for most. See [how to choose a teapot](#).

## Build it up slowly

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Build it up slowly, Teaware Essentials: What You Actually Need. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/teaware-essentials/*

Start with kettle, strainer, cup. Add a heat-holding teapot when you brew for more than one. Add a gaiwan when you want to explore loose leaf seriously. Add the matcha kit only if you drink matcha. Bought in that order, against how you actually drink, a tiny amount of teaware covers everything. For the basics, all most drinkers need beyond the kettle is a decent [mug](#), a [teapot](#) and a [mesh strainer](#), with a [storage tin](#) for loose leaf and a [chasen](#) only if matcha is your thing.

## Teaware essentials for daily UK use at a glance

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for Teaware Essentials: What You Actually Need. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/teaware-essentials/*

Item	Genuinely essential?	Typical UK price
Kettle (reaches full boil)	Yes	£15-£60 standard; £80-£150 for variable-temperature models
Decent mug or cup (200-300ml)	Yes	£3-£20
Teapot (250-1000ml)	For loose-leaf or multi-cup drinkers	£10-£40 standard; £80+ for premium
Tea strainer (metal mesh)	For loose-leaf drinkers; the unsung hero of upgrading from bags	£3-£10
Storage tin or sealed container	For loose-leaf freshness	£5-£15
Variable-temperature kettle	For drinkers serious about green and white tea	£60-£150
Gaiwan (110-150ml)	For gongfu cha practice	£8-£30
Chasen (matcha whisk)	For matcha drinkers only	£10-£25
Largely-decorative tea sets	Mostly waste for daily drinkers; nice as gifts	£30-£150+

## The bottom line on teaware essentials

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for The bottom line on teaware essentials, Teaware Essentials: What You Actually Need. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/teaware-essentials/*

You need a kettle and a mug; everything else is optional. The single most useful upgrade beyond the basics is a mesh strainer (around £5), which transforms loose-leaf brewing; a teapot helps if you drink loose leaf or serve several cups, and a variable-temperature kettle helps for green and white. Beyond those four, you are into specialty equipment that serves specific practices rather than improving the daily cup. The marginal returns drop steeply: a £25 to £50 baseline kit gets you most of the benefit, and after that the money is better spent on better leaf.

For the matching kit, the [teaware range](#).

## Reference noted

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](#). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Reference noted, Teaware Essentials: What You Actually Need. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/teaware-essentials/>*

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

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

## More teaware reading

For brewing technique see [how to brew black tea](#) and [how to brew green tea](#). For gongfu cha equipment see the [gongfu cha method](#); for matcha, [what is matcha](#); for bamboo strainers, [Tunta](#). For loose-leaf context see the [loose-leaf tea overview](#).

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