Tea Cocktails: The Essential Guide

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Tea cocktails, in summary:** Tea cocktails explained: infused spirits, tea-as-mixer, Earl Grey Marteani, cold-brew bases. How to make tea cocktails at home.

Tea is, quietly, one of the great cocktail ingredients: a ready made source of tannin, aroma, bitterness and colour in dozens of profiles. This is the overview for our cocktails and cooking cluster; the specific drinks are linked below and the actual recipes are in the cocktail recipes.

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

Why bartenders love tea

Tea gives a cocktail what amari, bitters and vermouth give it, structure and aromatic complexity, but with infinite variation and no alcohol of its own. Tannin adds grip and a dry backbone; the aromatics (bergamot, smoke, jasmine, malt) carry the nose; and a strong brew holds up against spirit. It is a flavour toolkit, not a novelty, the point the food pairing guide makes for the plate.

The two core methods

There are two ways tea enters a cocktail. As a brew: a strong, cooled, properly made tea used as the liquid, see mocktails for the alcohol free version of the same idea. Or as an infusion: tea steeped directly into a spirit or a syrup, covered in tea infused gin and spirits. Almost every tea cocktail is one of these two, and both start from a strong, clean brew.

Where to start

The classic gateway is the Earl Grey martini and the bergamot gin family, see Earl Grey cocktails; the easiest crowd pleasers are tea punches built on hibiscus or fruit tea, see the iced tea guide. Start there, then explore by matching tea profile to spirit as the cluster describes.

The tea to keep for mixing

A strong black or Earl Grey, a green or jasmine, and a tart hibiscus cover most cocktails between them; matcha covers the vivid green and creamy drinks, see the matcha guide. These map onto the same profiles as the brewed guides, just aimed at a glass.

The essentials: Tea cocktails

Method	How it works	Best teas for it
Tea-infused spirits	Steep tea leaves in spirit (gin, vodka, rum) for 30 min to 24 hours; use the infused spirit as a cocktail base	Earl Grey in gin (Earl Grey Marteani), oolong in whisky, jasmine in vodka
Tea-as-mixer	Brew strong cold tea, use as the diluent in cocktails alongside or instead of soda water	Black tea in whisky highballs, jasmine tea in white spirits, hibiscus in rum
Tea syrup	Brew very strong tea concentrate and combine with simple syrup at 1:1; use as flavoured sweetener	Earl Grey syrup, chai syrup, masala syrup
Tea-cured ice	Freeze brewed tea into ice cubes; use in cocktails for slow flavour release	Hibiscus iced ice, green tea ice
Cold-brew tea base	Cold-brew tea overnight for clean flavour; use as the dominant base in low-ABV drinks	Cold-brew oolong, cold-brew matcha, cold-brew rooibos
Best for	Drinkers exploring beyond standard cocktails; afternoon-tea hosts looking for adult variants	Whatever you already have in the cupboard

What to buy to get started

For tea cocktail experimentation buy good Earl Grey, jasmine green tea, hibiscus tea, chai blend, and Lapsang Souchong (smoky black tea, brilliant in whisky drinks). For spirits start with a good gin, vodka, and whisky. For supporting ingredients you need lemons, simple syrup, and basic cocktail equipment.

Reference noted

- PubMed: Green tea catechins and human health

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · Drink what you like, not what the shelf says you should. Curiosity is the only reliable guide.

More cocktail reading

For specific tea types see the Earl Grey overview, the jasmine tea, the Lapsang Souchong, and the hibiscus. For cold-brew technique see the cold brew tea guide. For tea-and-food pairing see the tea pairing guide. For other tea-as-ingredient applications see the cooking with tea.

The bottom line on tea cocktails

One of the easiest creative cocktail directions for home use, requiring nothing beyond tea you probably already own, basic spirits, and 30 minutes of experimentation. Earl Grey gin is the foundation; cold-brewed strong tea as mixer is the second technique; everything else builds from those two. Worth trying if cocktails interest you and you want to explore beyond standard gin and tonic. Treat it as kitchen experimentation

rather than precision bartending; results are forgiving and personal preference dominates.

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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