Tea Infused Gin and Spirits: The Cocktail Infusion Guide

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Tea-infused gin and spirits, in summary:** Tea-infused gin and spirits combine aromatic tea with neutral spirit; Earl Grey gin classic; 2 tbsp per 750ml, 2 hours infusion; cocktail.

Infusing tea directly into a spirit is the single highest leverage tea cocktail technique: one step, huge flavour, no equipment. It is also the easiest to get wrong. This sits in the cocktails cluster beside Earl Grey cocktails.

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

How it works

Alcohol is a powerful solvent, more aggressive than hot water, so it pulls flavour, colour and tannin out of tea fast at room temperature. Put loose tea (or a good bag) into gin, vodka or rum, wait, strain, and you have a tea spirit ready to mix. The principle is the same extraction this wiki teaches throughout, just with ethanol instead of water.

The timing is everything

This is the whole skill. Because alcohol extracts so fast, tea infused spirits go from beautifully aromatic to harsh and bitterly tannic in a surprisingly short window, often minutes for a strong black, not hours. Taste frequently and strain the moment it is right. Over infusion is the universal beginner mistake and is unfixable once done, the same over extraction principle as bitter tea, accelerated.

Timing by tea

The safe window varies by type. As a rough guide at room temperature: black tea (Earl Grey, English Breakfast, lapsang) 90 to 120 minutes; oolong 60 to 90; white tea 60 to 120; green and jasmine 30 to 60, since their delicate aromatics come out quickly; herbal (hibiscus, chamomile, peppermint) 30 to 60. The standard ratio is 2 tablespoons of loose leaf per 750ml of spirit. Taste from halfway and strain the moment it is right; over-infusing gives a bitter, astringent result that cannot be fixed, and once fully strained a cleared spirit keeps indefinitely. Avoid heavily aromatic gins such as Hendrick's or Bombay Sapphire, which compete with the tea rather than carry it.

Best tea and spirit pairings

Earl Grey and gin is the classic, see Earl Grey cocktails. Smoky lapsang and whisky or mezcal is a sophisticated savoury match, see Lapsang Souchong. Jasmine or green and vodka is clean and floral; spiced chai and dark rum is autumnal and rich, see the chai guide. Match spirit weight to tea weight as the cluster describes.

Cold infusion for delicate teas

For delicate green, white and jasmine, a longer, gentler cold infusion in vodka, 4 to 6 hours in the fridge, gives a cleaner result than a fast aggressive one, the same smoothness principle as cold brew. Cold extraction is selective for aroma and leaves more of the tannin behind. Robust black and lapsang are forgiving; delicate teas need patience and a lighter spirit.

Using your tea spirit

A tea infused spirit drops straight into any cocktail that suits its profile: Earl Grey gin into a martini or collins, lapsang whisky into an old fashioned, chai rum into a hot or spiced drink. It also works in the kitchen (Earl Grey gin in chocolate truffles, lapsang vodka in a dressing) and a bottled, labelled batch makes a good gift. The cocktail recipes give exact builds; this page is the infusion that powers them.

What it boils down to

Tea infused spirits are the best value tea cocktail move: trivial method, huge payoff, one critical rule, strain before it over extracts. Get the timing right and a bottle of ordinary gin becomes a bar quality ingredient, ready for the cocktail recipes.

In short: tea-infused gin and spirits

Pairing	Note
Earl Grey + London Dry gin	Audrey Saunders Pegu Club classic; bergamot-floral signature
Lapsang Souchong + whisky	Smoke-meets-smoke; peated Islay alternative
Jasmine + vodka	Floral cocktail base; martini variation
Hibiscus + tequila	Mexican-influenced; tart pink pairing
Genmaicha + sake	Japanese pairing; umami harmony
Standard ratio	2 tablespoons leaf per 750ml spirit, 2 hours infusion
Cold infusion	Delicate teas, 4-6 hours fridge; gentler
Tip	Use proper loose-leaf; bag-grade tea makes flat infusion

Reference noted

- PubMed: Green tea catechins and human health

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · Freshness beats provenance for most drinkers. Buy a smaller bag more often.

More cocktail reading

Continue with Earl Grey martini recipe, Lapsang Souchong, tea cocktails, jasmine tea, hibiscus tea and how to make tea.

More from the tea wiki

- Green tea
- Black tea
- Oolong tea
- White tea
- Herbal tea
- Caffeine in tea
- How to make tea properly
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