Does White Tea Have Caffeine? Yes, Sometimes More Than Green

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **White tea caffeine, in summary:** Does white tea have caffeine? Yes, sometimes more than green tea. A breakdown of caffeine in white tea, bud-only effect, brewing tips.

White tea has a gentle, delicate reputation, and most people assume that means low caffeine. The answer is less simple than that, and occasionally the reverse of the myth. This one lives with the caffeine pages, beside the white tea guide and the ultimate caffeine guide.

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

Yes, white tea has caffeine

White tea is true tea from Camellia sinensis, so it does contain caffeine; "white" refers to minimal processing, not decaffeination. Anyone choosing white tea in the belief that it is caffeine free is mistaken; a cup with zero caffeine has to be herbal or rooibos, so look at the low caffeine list and decaf vs caffeine free.

The surprising part: it can be high

Here is the myth buster. White tea is often made largely from young buds and tips, and young growth can be relatively high in caffeine, so a bud heavy white like Silver Needle can carry as much caffeine as, or more than, some greens or even lighter blacks, the opposite of the delicate equals decaf assumption. Leaf and bud styles like White Peony tend lower. See Silver Needle for the styles.

Why the cup is usually gentle anyway

In practice white tea often delivers a low caffeine cup not because the leaf is low but because it is brewed gently, cooler water and a soft hand, and frequently steeped lightly, see how to brew white tea. That is the partial extraction principle: the dose is set by the brew as much as the leaf, the core idea of this cluster. The L theanine that comes with white tea also softens how the same caffeine feels, which is part of why it seems gentle even when the dose is real.

The range

Brewed normally, white tea typically lands somewhere in the low to moderate band, broadly comparable to green tea, roughly 15 to 45 mg a cup, but a strong, bud heavy, longer steep can push higher. As always it is a controllable range, not a fixed figure, see the caffeine guide.

If you want it low

Brew white tea cooler and shorter, choose leaf and bud styles over pure bud, and re steep (the second infusion is lower), the same levers as everywhere in this cluster. For none at all, go caffeine free, see the low caffeine list.

White tea caffeine at a glance

Field	Detail
Quick answer	Yes, white tea contains caffeine; the "naturally caffeine-free" perception is wrong
Range per cup	Approximately 15-50mg per cup, with significant variation depending on grade and brewing
Compared to black tea	Generally lower (15-50mg vs 40-60mg) but the overlap is real
Compared to green tea	Similar range to green tea (15-30mg typical)
Bud-only grades (Silver Needle)	Often have MORE caffeine than mature-leaf grades because young buds concentrate caffeine
Brewing effect	Cold-brewing reduces extracted caffeine; lower temperatures and shorter times also reduce
L-theanine effect	White tea carries a good deal of L theanine, which smooths the way the caffeine comes across
Best for caffeine-aware drinkers	Cold-brewed mature-leaf white tea like Shou Mei or Gong Mei delivers least caffeine

Why bud-heavy white can carry caffeine

The tea plant concentrates caffeine in its young leaf buds as a natural pest defence, so bud-only grades like Silver Needle can carry more than mature-leaf grades, or even some greens, despite the delicate cup; aromatic delicacy and caffeine content are largely independent. If you want the dose down, the levers are the same as anywhere: cooler water (75 to 80C, never boiling) and a short steep, mature-leaf grades over pure bud, and a re-steep, since the second infusion is lower. A 15-second rinse you pour away, the gongfu first-pour trick, removes roughly 20 to 30 per cent before you drink, and a cold brew overnight extracts about 30 to 40 per cent less than a hot one.

What to buy if you want it low

For lower-caffeine white tea, choose mature-leaf grades: Shou Mei or Gong Mei sit below bud-only Silver Needle, and brew them cool and short. For no caffeine whatsoever, switch categories to rooibos or herbal infusions; for a middle option there is decaf green or black.

Related on the wiki: Does Chamomile Tea Have Caffeine?, Does Peppermint Tea Have Caffeine?, Does Rooibos Tea Have Caffeine? The No.

Reference noted

- EFSA Scientific Opinion on the Safety of Caffeine (2015)
- NHS guidance on caffeine

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · Choose the white tea you like drinking, not the one the label makes sound mildest. Curiosity is the only reliable guide.

More caffeine reading

For broader caffeine context see the caffeine content guide and the what happens after drinking tea. For white tea detail see the white tea overview and the White Peony wiki. For ingredient context see the L-theanine ingredient guide. For decaf options see the decaf tea overview. For caffeine-free alternatives see the rooibos and herbal tea.

The bottom line on white tea caffeine

White tea has real caffeine, sometimes more than green tea, particularly in bud-only grades like Silver Needle. The "naturally low caffeine" assumption is wrong. The cup feels gentler than coffee or black tea because of L-theanine modulation, not because of lower caffeine. For really low caffeine choose mature leaf white tea grades (Shou Mei) brewed cool and short, or switch entirely to rooibos or herbal infusions. For a balanced, moderate caffeine hit that feels smooth, white tea works well; just don't assume it's the lowest caffeine choice.

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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