How Much Caffeine in Oolong Tea? The Middle Band

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Caffeine in oolong tea, in summary:** Oolong sits between green and black in caffeine: 25-60mg per 250ml cup, light oolongs lower, dark roasted oolongs higher; gongfu sessions total more.

Oolong is the in between tea, partially oxidised, and its caffeine sits, broadly, in between too, with a real twist from the way oolong is usually brewed. A neighbouring page in the caffeine series is the oolong guide.

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

The range

A cup of oolong typically lands in a middle band, roughly 30 to 55 mg, between a light green and a strong black, though, as this cluster keeps stressing, the brew moves it more than the category does. Lighter, greener oolongs tend lower; darker, roasted ones tend a little higher.

The gongfu twist

Here is the oolong specific point. Oolong is often brewed gongfu style, many short infusions from the same leaf, see gongfu brewing at home. The first infusions carry the most caffeine and it tapers across subsequent steeps, so a session of small cups spreads the caffeine out and the early cups are the strong ones. Brewed Western style in one long steep it behaves more like a single moderate black.

Light versus dark oolong

Greener, lightly oxidised oolongs (Tieguanyin style) sit nearer the green tea end; darker, roasted oolongs (Wuyi rock style) sit nearer black, the styles explained in the oolong guide and Fujian region. Knowing which you have predicts the rough end of the range.

How it compares

Roughly: matcha and strong black above, oolong in the middle, green and white below, herbal at zero, the full picture in the caffeine guide and tea vs coffee. Overlap is large; brewing decides.

Practical notes

For a lower caffeine oolong cup: lighter oxidation, cooler water, shorter steeps, and lean on the later gongfu infusions. For a lift: a strong first steep of a roasted oolong. The L theanine smoothing applies here too, see L theanine.

What it boils down to

Oolong is a moderate, middle of the range caffeine tea whose dose is shaped strongly by oxidation level and especially by the many short infusions brewing it invites. Treat it as a controllable middle band, not a fixed number.

In short: oolong caffeine

Type	Range per 250ml
Light oolong (Tieguanyin, Baozhong)	25-40mg, closer to green tea
Mid oolong (Tung Ting, Taiwanese)	30-50mg, between green and black
Dark oolong (Wuyi rock, traditional Dong Ding)	40-60mg, closer to black tea
Gongfu session (5-10 short steeps)	Total often 60-120mg across the session
Compared to coffee	About a quarter to a half of filter coffee
L-theanine	Higher in lighter oolong; smoother feel
Best for caffeine-sensitive	Light oolong, Western single-steep, morning only
Decaf oolong	Rare; most decaf is black or green

Why dark oolong sits higher, and a few common questions

The dry leaf carries roughly the same caffeine per gram across oolong styles; what changes is how readily it extracts. Partial oxidation alters the leaf cell walls, so a darker, more roasted Wuyi rock oolong releases more caffeine into the cup than a lighter Tieguanyin brewed the same way. Gongfu sessions use more leaf (5 to 7g across many short steeps), so the total across an afternoon is higher than a single Western cup, but spread out on a gentler ramp. A few questions that recur: decaf oolong is rare, since most decaf is black or green, so for less caffeine a short steep of a light oolong is the better route; and oolong sits within the NHS 200mg daily pregnancy guidance, so a cup or two of light oolong a day is comfortably within the limit. Keep it to the morning and early afternoon if you sleep lightly. This is general information, not medical advice.

Closer to home, the loose leaf range and worldwide teas.

Reference noted

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

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · How you brew the oolong matters more than where you bought it. A budget oolong brewed with care for a short time can beat a dear one brewed carelessly.

More caffeine reading

Continue with caffeine in tea, oolong tea, Tieguanyin, oolong oxidation, does oolong tea have caffeine and tea and sleep.

More from the tea wiki

- Green tea
- Black tea
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