

Can You Drink Old Tea?

From the Teas.co.uk wiki

Can you drink old tea, in summary: Old, dry, clean tea is almost always fine, just duller. Damp or musty tea has spoiled and is binned. Use your senses, not the printed date.

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for Can You Drink Old Tea?. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/can-you-drink-old-tea/>*

"Can you drink old tea" gets a reassuring answer with one firm exception. This sits beside [does tea expire](#) and [can old tea make you sick](#).

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

Yes, if it is dry and clean

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Yes, if it is dry and clean, Can You Drink Old Tea?. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/can-you-drink-old-tea/>*

Tea found at the back of the cupboard months past its date is, in the overwhelming majority of cases, perfectly safe to drink if it has stayed dry. It will likely taste flatter and less aromatic than fresh, but stale is a quality issue, not a safety one.

The one time the answer is no

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for The one time the answer is no, Can You Drink Old Tea?. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/can-you-drink-old-tea/>*

Do not drink tea showing any sign of moisture damage: visible mould, a musty or sour smell, clumping, or obvious damp. That tea has spoiled and is the single genuine exception, bin it, see [can old tea make you sick](#).

The test

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for The test, Can You Drink Old Tea?. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/can-you-drink-old-tea/>*

Forget the printed date. Look: any fuzz or odd colour patches? Smell: musty, sour, off? If clean and dry, brew it. If your senses say something is wrong, trust them over optimism; tea is cheap. This sense-check

beats any date every time.

Making old-but-fine tea taste better

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Making old-but-fine tea taste better, Can You Drink Old Tea?. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/can-you-drink-old-tea/*

Stale-but-safe tea brews flat because aromatics faded, not because anything is wrong. Use a touch more leaf, brew to the correct temperature and time for the type, and accept it will not match fresh, see the [water temperature guide](#). It is fine for everyday drinking or for iced tea where freshness is less critical.

Old herbal and flavoured tea

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Old herbal and flavoured tea, Can You Drink Old Tea?. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/can-you-drink-old-tea/*

Herbal tisanes and flavoured blends lose their character soonest, so old ones are the most disappointing, though still safe if dry. If the whole point was the flavour and it has gone, replace it rather than persevere, see [how long tea lasts](#).

The clear takeaway

Old dry clean tea: drink it, expect it duller. Old damp or musty tea: bin it. Your eyes and nose are the authority, not the date on the box, see [does tea go off](#).

Pair it with the [English tea range](#) and [loose leaf range](#).

Reference noted

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

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FROM THE CURATOR *teas* · Start cheap, stay cheap until something stops you. Most rich teas reward patience, not budget.

More storage reading

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for More storage reading, Can You Drink Old Tea?. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/can-you-drink-old-tea/*

- [Can old tea make you sick](#)
- [Does tea go off](#)

- [How long tea lasts](#)
- [How to keep tea fresh](#)

Want to actually buy a good one?

If this has helped you decide, the next step is buying a genuinely good one judged on the cup rather than the marketing. The products shown on this page are matched to exactly this topic, so they are the starting point. To see the wider range, browse [tea and herbal infusions at teas.co.uk](#) or the full [tea shop](#). As everywhere on this wiki: buy on the cup and the description, never the marketing, check the per-cup price, and remember free UK delivery is over £35.

[Browse the tea range ?](#)

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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](#)

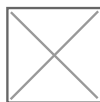
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