Honey in Tea: Better Than Sugar, or Just Different?

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Honey in tea, in summary:** Honey tastes lovely in tea but is not meaningfully healthier than sugar at a teaspoon. Calorie maths, glycaemic context and when honey actually wins.

Honey in tea is delicious and surrounded by health myth. Choose it for flavour, not in the belief it beats sugar nutritionally. This sits in the sweetening cluster beside best sweetener for tea.

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

General information about honey in tea; it is not medical or dietary advice. Anyone watching their blood sugar or diet should ask a pharmacist, GP or dietitian.

The flavour case for honey

Honey adds a floral, rounded sweetness that suits many teas, black, ginger, lemon and camomile above all. As a taste choice it is excellent and a fair reason to prefer it.

The health myth

In a teaspoon in tea, honey is essentially free sugars like any other; it is not meaningfully "healthier" than sugar at that dose. Its trace compounds are not present in amounts that change the dietary picture in a cup of tea.

Where the myth comes from

Honey in warm lemon tea has a long association with sore throats, and the comfort is real, but it is the comfort of a coating on the throat, not an upgrade over sugar, see soothing teas.

The hot tea caveat

Very hot tea will dull honey's delicate aromatics; adding it to slightly cooled tea preserves more of its character. It still counts as free sugars whatever the temperature.

Do not add honey to delicate green or white

As with sugar, honey buries the subtlety of fine green, white and aromatic teas. Reserve it for bold black, spiced and herbal cups, see tea without sugar.

Honey and blood sugar

Honey still raises blood sugar; for anyone managing diabetes it is not a free pass and is a matter for proper advice.

Summary

Honey in tea is a lovely flavour choice and a poor health argument; in a teaspoon it is free sugars like any other. Enjoy it for taste, not as a virtue, see is sugar in tea bad.

Honey versus sugar, the comparison

In the quantity you put in a cup, honey is not meaningfully healthier than sugar; it wins on flavour, not on health.

Question	Answer
Is honey healthier than sugar in tea?	Not meaningfully, at a teaspoon the difference is trivial
Where honey does come out ahead	Flavour, a floral, rounded sweetness sugar lacks
Very hot tea	Let it cool a little; scalding heat dulls honey's aromatic character
Delicate green or white tea	Best left unsweetened so you taste what you paid for
Blood sugar	Honey still raises it; treat as sugar, not a free pass

The everyday teas in the same family: English Breakfast, Earl Grey, green tea, loose leaf tea, Darjeeling, oolong, and herbal tea. Find more in the tea shop; UK delivery is free over £35.

Reference noted

- PubMed: Green tea catechins and human health

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · Use ordinary honey first; upgrade only when you taste what is missing. Most rich teas reward patience, not budget.

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