How to Use a Tea Infuser Properly

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **How to use a tea infuser, in summary:** An infuser has one job: give the leaf room in full water contact. Use the biggest that fits, dose properly, submerge it, time and remove it, cover, and rinse it.

A tea infuser is the simplest route to loose leaf tea, and most people sabotage it by choking the leaf. Used properly it is excellent. This sits in the teaware cluster beside choosing a teapot.

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

Bigger is better

The single biggest mistake is a tiny mesh ball stuffed with leaf. The leaf cannot swell and water cannot circulate, so the cup is weak and uneven. Use a large basket infuser that fills most of the mug.

Dose correctly

Roughly a teaspoon of loose leaf per cup, adjusted to taste, loosely in the basket, not packed. Packing defeats the point of using an infuser at all.

Full water contact

The infuser must sit in the water, not perch above it. The whole leaf bed needs to be submerged for the full steep or extraction is partial and weak, see weak tea causes.

Time it, then remove it

Steep for the type, around three to four minutes for black, less for green, then lift the infuser out so the tea does not slide into bitterness, see the temperature guide.

Cover while steeping

A saucer or lid over the mug keeps heat in for an even extraction, especially for black and herbal that want sustained heat.

Clean it every time

Rinse the mesh immediately; dried tannin clogs it and taints the next cup. A blocked infuser is a slow, weak brew waiting to happen, see cleaning teaware.

Re steep good leaf

Quality loose leaf gives a second, sometimes third infusion. The infuser makes this effortless, far better value than one weak bagged cup, see infuser vs bag.

Summary

Big basket, correct loose dose, fully submerged, timed and removed, covered, cleaned each time, re steeped. Do that and an infuser rivals a teapot, see choosing a teapot.

Using an infuser, at a glance

Rule	Why
Bigger is better	Leaf must expand; a cramped ball strangles the cup
Dose correctly	Roughly a teaspoon per cup; under-dosing gives thin tea
Full water contact	Submerge it; leaf above the waterline does nothing
Time then remove	Lift it out on time; leaving it in over-steeps
Cover & clean	Cover while steeping; rinse every time, re-steep good leaf

If the cup comes out thin

When an infuser cup is thin and disappointing, the fix is almost never a more expensive infuser, it is a bigger one, more leaf, full immersion, or a shorter timed steep; it is a method problem, not a hardware one. The dangling spoon-ball sold next to the baskets is the single worst common design, because it strangles the leaf. Put the difference into better leaf, where it actually shows in the cup.

For the home shelf, the teaware range.

Reference noted

- PubMed: Green tea catechins and human health

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · A roomy infuser that lets the leaf open beats five cramped ones used in a hurry.

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