One Cup Tea Brewing: Loose Leaf Without a Pot

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **One-cup tea brewing, in summary:** A great single cup needs no teapot: a big basket infuser, water at the right temperature, covered, timed, removed and steeped again. The minimal method.

One cup brewing is how most people actually drink tea, and you can make it excellent with no teapot at all. This sits in the teaware cluster beside do you need a teapot.

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

The minimal kit

A kettle, a mug, a large basket infuser and a lid or saucer. That is a complete loose leaf single cup setup, no pot required, see teaware essentials.

The method

Teaspoon of loose leaf in a big basket infuser, correct temperature water poured over it, infuser fully submerged, mug covered, timed for the type, then infuser removed, see using an infuser and the temperature guide.

Cover the mug

The single most skipped step. A lid or saucer keeps the temperature up for an even extraction, the difference between a flat and a full single cup.

Remove the leaf on time

Without a pot to decant from, the leaf will over steep if left. Lift the infuser out at time; do not let it sit, see over steeping.

Re steep the leaf

Good leaf gives a second cup; keep the infuser and re brew rather than binning after one. Single cup does not mean single use leaf.

No infuser? Improvise

Brew loose in the mug and pour through a small strainer into a second mug, the original travel method. Crude but it respects the leaf room principle, see infuser vs strainer.

At work or travelling

An infuser mug or a travel flask with a basket gives proper loose leaf tea away from a kitchen; this is where one cup technique pays off most, see do you need a teapot.

What it boils down to

Big infuser, right temperature water, submerged, covered, timed, removed, re steeped. One excellent cup needs no teapot, see choosing a teapot.

Which no pot method is which

Method	Kit	Best for	Watch out for
One cup brewing	mug + large basket infuser + lid	a clean single cup, leaf removed on time	must lift the infuser out, no pot to decant
No equipment / office	just a cup and hot water	travel, the office, proving leaf beats kit	needs a saucer pour off to stop it
Grandpa style	a mug, nothing else	all day forgiving leaf, topped up	broken or very astringent leaf turns bitter

They are three points on one idea, leaf and water matter more than equipment, so pick by situation: a basket infuser for a precise single cup, the bare cup method when you have nothing, grandpa style when you want it to look after itself across a working day.

Want to actually buy a good one?

For one cup brewing, buy a really good loose leaf and judge it by the cup it makes, not by the marketing. The infusers and teas shown here suit single cup brewing, so start there. To see the wider range, browse tea and herbal infusions at teas.co.uk or the full tea shop. Wiki wide, the one cup rule holds: the cup and its description outrank the marketing, each tea's cost per cup matters, and UK delivery is free past £35.

Browse the tea range ?

Related on the wiki: Tetley One Cup Engineered For The Single Mug.

Worth picking up: the English tea range and loose leaf range.

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · Begin with the simplest one cup method here that fits your routine. Teapots and bigger collections are for week two.

More brewing reading

- Do you need a teapot
- How to use a tea infuser
- Teaware essentials
- Best kettle for tea

More from the tea wiki

- Green tea
- Black tea
- Oolong tea
- White tea
- Herbal tea
- Caffeine in tea
- How to make tea properly
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