

How to Taste Tea (Step by Step)

From the Teas.co.uk wiki

How to taste tea, in summary: Tasting tea is a method not a gift: smell dry then wet leaf, look, slurp to aerate, follow the sequence, feel texture, re-taste as it cools, note one line.

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for How to Taste Tea (Step by Step). Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/how-to-taste-tea/>*

How to taste tea, as a method rather than a mystique: a short, repeatable routine that builds a real palate within weeks. This sits in the tasting cluster beside [the tasting guide](#).

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

Smell the leaf, dry then wet

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Smell the leaf, dry then wet, How to Taste Tea (Step by Step). Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/how-to-taste-tea/>*

Start with the dry leaf aroma, then smell the warmed wet leaf after a short infusion. The wet leaf often telegraphs the cup, floral, malty, marine, before you taste anything.

Look at the liquor

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Look at the liquor, How to Taste Tea (Step by Step). Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/how-to-taste-tea/>*

Colour and clarity hint at oxidation and strength: pale gold for delicate green, deep amber for robust black. It is a quick predictor, not the verdict.

Slurp to aerate

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Slurp to aerate, How to Taste Tea (Step by Step). Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/how-to-taste-tea/>*

Sip sharply so the tea sprays across the whole mouth and up behind the nose. This retronasal aeration is how professionals taste; it makes aroma, the bulk of flavour, vivid, see [the flavour wheel](#).

Note the sequence

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Note the sequence, How to Taste Tea (Step by Step). Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/how-to-taste-tea/*

Attack (first impression), mid palate (body and main flavour), and finish (what lingers). Many teas are judged on a long, clean finish as much as the opening.

Feel the texture

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Feel the texture, How to Taste Tea (Step by Step). Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/how-to-taste-tea/*

Separately from taste, notice mouthfeel: thin or full, smooth or astringent, see [astringency](#). Texture is a major part of quality.

Re taste as it cools

Tea changes as it cools; sweetness and faults both emerge. A tea that is still good lukewarm is usually a good tea, see [faults](#).

Write one line

A single recorded sentence per tea builds memory and a personal reference faster than anything else. Comparison over time is where skill compounds.

The clear takeaway

Smell, look, slurp, track attack body finish, feel texture, re taste cool, note it. Repeat across similar teas and a palate forms quickly, see [the tasting guide](#).

Tasting tea, step by step

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Step	What to do
Smell the leaf	Dry, then wet after the first splash, two different aromas
Look	Colour and clarity of the liquor; clues to strength and style
Slurp	Aerate it across the palate, like wine, not a polite sip
Sequence	Note attack, mid-palate and finish separately
Texture & cooling	Feel the body; re-taste as it cools, flavours shift

The single fastest improvement to anyone's tasting is the slurp: it is the step people are most embarrassed to do and the one that adds the most information, putting the tea where your sense of smell can actually read it. The payoff of all this is not performance, it is better choosing and more pleasure for the same money, the same value-first idea the [how to judge tea quality](#) guide takes. Practise on contrasting pairs of the same type, an [oolong](#) or a [green tea](#), from the [English tea range](#) and [loose leaf range](#), or the full [tea shop](#).

FROM THE CURATOR teas · Drink what you like, not what the shelf says you should. Curiosity is the only reliable guide.

More tea reading

- [how to brew tea properly](#)
- [Tea and food pairing](#)
- [How to judge tea quality](#)
- [Oolong tea](#)

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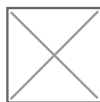
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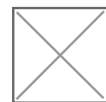
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