

The Tea Flavour Wheel, Made Simple

From the Teas.co.uk wiki

Tea flavour wheel, in summary: Tea flavour wheel explained: floral, fruity, vegetal, malty, earthy, smoky, sweet, mineral, spice families and which teas show each.

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for The Tea Flavour Wheel, Made Simple. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/tea-flavour-wheel/>*

A tea flavour wheel is a tool for turning "it is nice" into specific, repeatable language by moving from broad families to precise notes. This sits in the tasting cluster beside [how to taste tea](#).

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

What it is

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for What it is, The Tea Flavour Wheel, Made Simple. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/tea-flavour-wheel/>*

A wheel arranges flavour and aroma terms from broad categories at the centre (floral, fruity, vegetal, roasted, malty, marine, earthy) outward to specific descriptors (rose, stone fruit, fresh cut grass, toast, cocoa). It is a vocabulary map.

How to use it

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for How to use it, The Tea Flavour Wheel, Made Simple. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/tea-flavour-wheel/>*

Work centre to edge. First decide the broad family, "this is vegetal", then zoom in, "more like spinach than grass". Narrowing in steps is far easier than reaching for a precise word cold.

Why it works

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Why it works, The Tea Flavour Wheel, Made Simple. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/tea-flavour-wheel/>*

Naming aids perception: once you have the word "malty" you start noticing maltiness. The wheel scaffolds attention, which is most of what tasting skill actually is, see [the tasting guide](#).

Typical family by tea type

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Typical family by tea type, The Tea Flavour Wheel, Made Simple. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/tea-flavour-wheel/*

Green skews vegetal and marine; black skews malty, fruity and cocoa; oolong floral to roasted; white delicate and hay like. The wheel plus type knowledge predicts a lot, see [black](#), [green](#) and [oolong](#).

Aroma versus taste on the wheel

Most wheel terms are aromas, smelled retronasally, not tongue tastes. Slurping to aerate is what makes the wheel usable, see [how to taste tea](#).

Make it personal

If a tea reminds you of a specific memory or food, use that. A consistent personal lexicon beats a borrowed one you do not feel.

In a sentence

Use the wheel centre out: family first, then precise note. It is a thinking aid that accelerates description and perception, not a test to pass, see [the tasting guide](#).

The tea flavour wheel, family by family

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for The Tea Flavour Wheel, Made Simple. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/tea-flavour-wheel/*

Family	Common notes	Tea types where these dominate
Floral	Rose, jasmine, lavender, orchid, magnolia	Light oolong (Tieguanyin), jasmine green, Darjeeling first flush, white tea
Fruity	Apple, pear, citrus, stone fruit, dried fruit, berries	Darjeeling, Ceylon, fruit infusions, some oolongs
Vegetal	Grass, hay, spinach, seaweed, peas, lettuce	Sencha, gyokuro, longjing, fresh green tea
Malty/cereal	Bread, biscuit, malt, oats, breakfast cereal	Assam, Yorkshire Tea, English Breakfast blends
Earthy/woody	Forest floor, damp wood, mushroom, autumn leaves	Pu-erh, aged oolong, some Yunnan blacks
Smoky/roasted	Pine smoke, toasted bread, coffee, roasted nut	Lapsang Souchong, roasted oolong (Wuyi Yancha), hojicha
Sweet/honeyed	Honey, brown sugar, maple, caramel	Dian Hong (Yunnan black), aged white tea, premium Darjeeling
Mineral	Wet stone, chalk, salt, ocean breeze	Wuyi rock oolong (Yancha), high-mountain greens, some Ceylon

Family	Common notes	Tea types where these dominate
Spice	Cinnamon, clove, cardamom, ginger, anise	Chai blends, spiced black tea, some oolong

Teas to explore each family

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Teas to explore each family, The Tea Flavour Wheel, Made Simple. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/tea-flavour-wheel/>*

The wheel doubles as a shopping guide: once you know the family you like, it points to where to look next. For floral, try [jasmine green](#) or a light [oolong](#); for fruity, [Darjeeling first flush](#); for vegetal, Japanese [sencha](#); for malty, [Yorkshire Tea](#) or [English Breakfast](#); for earthy, [Pu-erh](#); for smoky, [Lapsang Souchong](#); for mineral, [Wuyi rock oolong](#). Browse the full [tea shop](#); free UK delivery is over £35.

FROM THE CURATOR *teas* · The infusion is more important than the shop. A short careful brew can lift a budget bag past a careless premium one.

More tea reading

For broader tasting context see the [practical tea tasting guide](#). For category context see the [black tea fundamentals](#), the [green tea overview](#), and the [oolong tea](#). For specific representative teas see the [Darjeeling](#), [Lapsang Souchong](#), and [Pu-erh](#) wikis.

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