Switching to Tea Instead of Coffee

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Switching from coffee to tea, in summary:** A UK guide to switching from coffee to tea: caffeine reality, gradual transition, which teas replace coffee best, what to expect.

Tea instead of coffee is one of the most successful caffeine changes people actually keep, for clear reasons. This sits in the energy cluster beside quitting coffee for tea.

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

General information about tea, not medical, dietary or fitness advice. Weight, metabolism and training decisions should be guided by a GP, dietitian or qualified professional. Tea is not a weight loss treatment.

The trade

You trade coffee's sharp, intense, sometimes jittery hit for tea's lower, smoother, more sustained lift, helped by L theanine. Less peak, fewer jitters, gentler afternoons and often better sleep, see L theanine.

The caffeine reality

Most tea has less caffeine per cup than brewed coffee, so expect a softer effect, or drink a strong black or matcha if you want more, see the caffeine guide and tea vs coffee.

Do it gradually

An abrupt big caffeine drop causes withdrawal headaches and slumps that get blamed on tea. Phase coffee down over a week or two and the switch sticks, see quitting coffee for tea.

Match strength to expectation

If you were a strong coffee drinker, start with robust black or matcha, not a delicate green, or the change feels like deprivation.

Keep the ritual

Much of coffee's appeal is ritual; rebuilding a deliberate tea ritual replaces that and is a big reason the swap holds, see making tea properly.

The afternoon win

The clearest benefit most people report is steadier afternoons and easier sleep from the lower, smoother dose, see tea for the afternoon slump.

In a sentence

Tea instead of coffee trades intensity for smoothness and better sleep; done gradually, with strength matched to habit and ritual preserved, it is a swap that lasts, see quitting coffee for tea.

What you need to know: Switching from coffee to tea

Aspect	What changes
Caffeine load	Coffee: 80-120mg per cup. Tea: 40-60mg. You'll feel less alert initially; this is the main adjustment
Alertness profile	Less sharp, more sustained; L-theanine modulates the caffeine into smoother focus
Stomach impact	Generally gentler than coffee; less acid, less reflux risk
Sleep quality	Often improves; lower caffeine load with same daily routine clears better by bedtime
Time to adjust	1-2 weeks of mild under-stimulation while caffeine receptors reset
Cost per cup	Tea is dramatically cheaper than café coffee (3-15p vs £2-£4); modest savings vs home filter coffee
Anxiety levels	Often improves for caffeine-sensitive drinkers; smoother alertness reduces jitter
What you lose	The morning coffee ritual (replaceable); the sharper alertness hit (genuinely missing for some)

What to switch to

If you were a strong coffee drinker, start with a robust black, Yorkshire Tea Gold or an Assam, or matcha for a coffee-strength hit; everyday switchers do fine on English Breakfast or PG Tips. Brew it properly (one bag, about four minutes, pressed before lifting out) so it delivers real caffeine. The cost case is real too: a daily café coffee can run to hundreds of pounds a year against a few pounds a month of home-brewed tea. Browse the full tea shop; free UK delivery is over £35.

Related on the wiki: Proffee, the protein-coffee take.

Reference noted

- EFSA Scientific Opinion on the Safety of Caffeine (2015)
- NHS guidance on caffeine

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · Buy on the cup, not on the label. The wider shelf is there for when you know what you like.

More tea reading

For caffeine context see the caffeine content guide and the tea vs coffee guide. For brewing technique that maximises caffeine see the how to brew black tea. For matcha as a coffee-strength option see the what is matcha. For the afternoon dip see tea for the afternoon slump.

More from the tea wiki

- Green tea
- Black tea
- Oolong tea
- White tea
- Herbal tea
- Caffeine in tea
- How to make tea properly
- Loose leaf vs teabag

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