How to Make Iced Tea (Properly, Not Bitter)

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **How to make iced tea, in summary:** Good iced tea is hot-brewed strong and chilled fast, not weak tea over ice: more leaf not a longer steep, sweeten warm, brew for the melt.

Good iced tea is simple but unforgiving of the two classic mistakes: bitterness and wateriness. Here is the method that avoids both. Keeping it company in the tea making pages is the cold brew guide.

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

Brew it strong

Use roughly 1.5 to 2 times the leaf you would for a hot cup, because ice will dilute it. Get strength from more leaf, not longer steeping, which adds bitterness.

Do not over steep

Steep for the normal time for the tea type, then remove the leaf. Over steeping to "make it strong" is the single biggest cause of bitter iced tea, see the temperature guide.

Sweeten while warm

If sweetening, dissolve it into the warm concentrate or use a simple syrup. Sugar added to a cold glass never dissolves and you over add chasing it, see sweetening tea.

Chill fast

Cool the concentrate quickly and pour over plenty of ice, or chill in the fridge. Slow cooling can cloud it (harmless "tea cream", worse in hard water and over-steeped tea); fast chilling keeps it clear.

Dilution plan

Account for melting ice: either brew a strong concentrate to pour over ice, or brew double strength and top with cold water. Either way the end glass should taste of tea, not water.

Flavour it

Lemon, mint, peach, ginger or berries add character and reduce the sugar needed. Add citrus after brewing, not during, to avoid bitterness, see iced tea recipes.

Best teas

Black for classic, green for light, fruit and herbal for caffeine free. Avoid delicate teas that get lost over ice, see black tea.

The clear takeaway

Strong base, normal steep time, sweeten warm, chill fast, plan for dilution. Get those and iced tea is reliably clean and brisk, see cold brew for the smoother route.

Iced tea, at a glance

Step	Rule
Brew strong	Roughly double strength; ice will dilute it hard
Do not over-steep	Strong is from more leaf, not a longer bitter steep
Sweeten warm	Sugar dissolves in warm tea, not in iced
Chill fast	Straight over plenty of ice or quickly in the fridge
Dilution plan	Brew for the melt; weak iced tea is under-brewed, not over-iced

The relevant aisle: the herbal & fruit infusions and green tea range.

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · If the iced tea described here appeals, try making a jug once. One cup of your own iced tea teaches more than twenty articles.

More tea reading

- How to make cold brew tea
- Iced tea
- How to make tea
- black tea explained

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