

## How to Make Chai From Scratch (Real Masala Chai)

From the Teas.co.uk wiki

**How to make chai from scratch, in summary:** Real chai is simmered, not steeped: strong Assam and whole bruised spices boiled in milk and water, sweetened to taste. Not a syrup cafe latte.

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for How to Make Chai From Scratch (Real Masala Chai). Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/how-to-make-chai-from-scratch/>*

Chai from scratch is simple, cheap and incomparably better than syrup based versions, once you know it is a simmered drink, not a steeped one. This sits in the tea making cluster beside [tea lattes](#).

*Last reviewed by the teas.co.uk team in April 2026.*

### What real chai is

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for What real chai is, How to Make Chai From Scratch (Real Masala Chai). Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/how-to-make-chai-from-scratch/>*

Traditional masala chai is strong black tea simmered with whole spices, milk and sweetener, not tea with a flavour syrup. The simmering is the technique, see [chai vs masala chai](#).

### The spices

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for The spices, How to Make Chai From Scratch (Real Masala Chai). Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/how-to-make-chai-from-scratch/>*

Cardamom, ginger, cinnamon, cloves, black pepper, fresh ginger optional. Lightly crush whole spices for the best extraction; ground works but is less clean, see [chai recipes](#).

### The tea

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for The tea, How to Make Chai From Scratch (Real Masala Chai). Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/how-to-make-chai-from-scratch/>*

A strong, robust Assam style black is traditional and necessary, it must stand up to spice and milk. A delicate tea disappears, see [Assam](#).

## The method

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](#). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for The method, How to Make Chai From Scratch (Real Masala Chai). Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/how-to-make-chai-from-scratch/>*

Simmer crushed spices in water a few minutes, add tea and simmer, add milk and bring back up, sweeten, strain. Simmering, not steeping, builds the depth, see [brewing basics](#).

## Milk and sweetener

Traditionally whole milk and a fair amount of sugar or jaggery; adjust to taste, oat milk works well, see [best milk](#).

## Common mistakes

Weak tea, not simmering, pre ground stale spice, or adding milk too early and scalding it. Strong tea, real simmer, fresh whole spice fixes all of them.

## What it boils down to

Simmer whole spices, add strong black, then milk, then sweeten, then strain. Real chai is a five minute technique that beats any concentrate, see [chai latte](#).

## Chai from scratch, at a glance

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Element	Rule
Tea	Strong black, Assam ideally; it must survive a simmer
Spices	Whole, bruised: cardamom, ginger, cloves, cinnamon, pepper
Method	Simmer spices and tea in water and milk, do not just steep
Sweetener	Integral to the style, but to taste, not by default
Not	A syrup-and-steamed-milk cafe chai latte; that is a different drink

Picks from the same corner: the [chai range](#).

**FROM THE CURATOR** *teas* · Spend less on prestige, more on freshness. A two-month-old supermarket bag still beats a three-year-old gift tin.

## More tea reading

- [How to make masala chai](#)
- [Masala chai](#)
- [Assam tea](#)
- [Tea lattes](#)

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## 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](#)

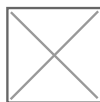
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