How to Make Thai Tea (the Bright Orange One)

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **How to make Thai tea, in summary:** Thai tea is strong sweet spiced black tea served iced with milk: brew it very strong, and the bright orange is usually food colouring, not the tea.

Thai iced tea, the vivid orange, creamy street drink, is strong spiced black tea with sweetened and condensed milk. Here is how to make it. Also in the tea making group, and closely related, is iced tea.

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

What it is

Strong black tea, often with star anise, tamarind or spice notes, heavily sweetened, served over ice with a float of evaporated or condensed milk.

The tea base

Brew a very strong spiced black concentrate, it must survive ice and milk. Traditional Thai tea mix exists, but strong Assam style black with a little star anise works, see Assam.

The colour question

The intense orange of commercial Thai tea is usually added colouring, not the tea. Home made will be a natural deep amber, it tastes the same; the neon hue is cosmetic.

Sweet and milk

Sweetened condensed milk both sweetens and creams it; some use sugar plus evaporated milk. It is meant to be a rich, sweet treat, see sweetening.

The method

Brew strong spiced tea, sweeten while hot, chill, pour over plenty of ice, float the milk on top for the signature layered look, then stir, see iced tea method.

Adjusting

It is traditionally very sweet; scale the sweetened milk down for a less intense version. Oat or evaporated alternatives work for the creaminess, see milk options. If in doubt, push the strength up, not down: the failure mode is always weakness.

The clear takeaway

Strong spiced black, sweetened condensed milk, ice, dramatic pour. The neon colour is dye, not tea; the flavour is all in a strong spiced base, and a muted brown-orange home version is the authentic one, see iced tea.

Thai tea, at a glance

Element	Rule
What it is	Strong sweet spiced black tea with milk, served iced and bright orange
Tea base	Strong black; traditional Thai mix often includes added colour
The colour	The vivid orange is usually food colouring, not the tea
Sweet & milk	Sweetened condensed/evaporated milk is traditional and integral
Serve	Brewed very strong, sweetened, chilled, poured over ice with milk

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