

# Tea for Beginners: How to Start Without Overspending

From the Teas.co.uk wiki

**Tea for beginners, in summary:** A UK beginner guide to tea: fix brewing first, sample broadly, buy equipment selectively. Avoid the specialty-tea spending trap.

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for Tea for Beginners: How to Start Without Overspending. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/tea-for-beginners/>*

Getting into tea looks complicated and is not. The beginner secret is that technique beats spending and you should start narrow. This sits at the centre of the getting started cluster beside [how to get into tea](#).

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

## Fix the free things first

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Fix the free things first, Tea for Beginners: How to Start Without Overspending. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/tea-for-beginners/>*

Fresh good water, correct temperature for the type, sensible steep time, and removing the leaf on time. These four cost nothing and improve the cup more than expensive leaf, see the [temperature guide](#). Use freshly drawn cold water, boil the kettle just before pouring, give black tea 3-4 minutes, and add milk only after the bag is out.

## Start with one or two types

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Start with one or two types, Tea for Beginners: How to Start Without Overspending. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/tea-for-beginners/>*

Do not buy one of everything. Pick a type or two you are drawn to, learn them, then widen. A black tea plus one herbal covers most daily needs; after a few weeks you will know whether you want stronger blacks, a different flavour, or to explore green. Depth before breadth builds a palate fast, see [the tasting guide](#).

## Loose leaf is the big upgrade

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Loose leaf is the big upgrade, Tea for Beginners: How to Start Without Overspending. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/tea-for-beginners/>*

Moving from dusty bags to whole loose leaf in a roomy infuser is the single biggest quality jump for the money. A basic teapot, a mesh strainer and a sealed tin (around £25-£40 all in) is the whole entry kit, see [loose leaf tea](#) and [using an infuser](#).

## Choose by character, not name

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Choose by character, not name, Tea for Beginners: How to Start Without Overspending. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/tea-for-beginners/>*

Decide brisk, light, malty, floral or caffeine free, then pick. Category tells you more than a brand label: "Darjeeling first flush" or "Japanese sencha" says more about the cup than the name on the box. Character beats romantic names every time, see [how to choose tea](#).

## Do not over buy

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Do not over buy, Tea for Beginners: How to Start Without Overspending. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/tea-for-beginners/>*

Tea fades; buy small amounts you will drink within months rather than hoarding. Finish one pack before buying the next variety, so you build real preference instead of a drawer of half-used teas, see [keeping tea fresh](#).

## Ignore the snobbery

You do not need ceremony or jargon to enjoy tea. A daily kitchen-table cup is as legitimate as any specialty ritual. Brew well, taste attentively, drink what you like, see [common mistakes](#).

## Bottom line

Fix water, temperature, time and timing; start with one or two types loose leaf; choose by character; widen slowly. That is the whole beginning, see [how to get into tea](#).

## Quick reference: Tea for beginners

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for Tea for Beginners: How to Start Without Overspending. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/tea-for-beginners/>*

Stage	What to do
Step 1 (free)	Brew your current tea properly: 95-100C water, 3-4 min, press the bag, fresh kettle water

Stage	What to do
Step 2 (£0-£10)	Buy a Brita filter jug if you're in hard-water area; biggest cup-quality upgrade for the money
Step 3 (£10-£20)	Try 3-4 mainstream brands side-by-side: PG Tips, Yorkshire, Tetley, Twinings English Breakfast
Step 4 (£15-£30)	Try one Earl Grey, one green tea, one herbal infusion to taste category differences
Step 5 (£20-£40)	If interested, try loose-leaf with a basic teapot and strainer; meaningful step up in cup quality
Step 6 (specialty)	Sample specialty single-region teas: Darjeeling, Assam, Ceylon, Tieguanyin oolong, Japanese sencha
What to skip	Premium "wellness" tea kits at £30+, complicated teaware sets, expensive specialty before you know what you like
Budget reality	You can develop a satisfying tea practice for under £50 lifetime spend on equipment; ongoing tea budget £30-£80 annually

## What to buy to start

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for What to buy to start, Tea for Beginners: How to Start Without Overspending. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/tea-for-beginners/>*

For mainstream exploration buy [PG Tips](#), [Yorkshire Tea](#), and [Twinings English Breakfast](#) in standard packs. For a flavoured variant try [Twinings Earl Grey](#). For category exploration try [green tea](#) and a [chamomile or peppermint](#) infusion. For loose-leaf entry try [Yorkshire Loose Leaf](#) or [Twinings loose](#). The only essential bit of kit is [a Brita filter jug](#) if you have hard water. Browse the full [tea shop](#); free UK delivery is over £35.

**FROM THE CURATOR** *teas* · Start cheap, stay cheap until something stops you. Most rich teas reward patience, not budget.

## More tea reading

For specific brand picks see the [PG Tips wiki](#), the [Yorkshire Tea](#), and the [Twinings brand guide](#). For tasting technique see the [practical tea tasting guide](#). For brewing see [how to make tea properly](#). For equipment see the [teaware essentials](#).

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for Tea for Beginners: How to Start Without Overspending. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/tea-for-beginners/>*

## 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](#)

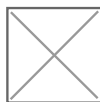
### Earn rewards on Teas.co.uk

Earn loyalty points on every order. Free to join.

**+100 pts**

**Create your free account**

Welcome bonus + earn on every order.



**100 pts = 1 tree**

**Plant a tree in Scotland**

Pledge points to our reforestation partner.

