

The Tea Pairing Chart (How to Actually Use It)

From the Teas.co.uk wiki

Tea pairing chart, in summary: A UK tea pairing chart: which teas go with which foods, the matching-or-contrasting principle, how astringency cuts rich food.

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for The Tea Pairing Chart (How to Actually Use It). Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/tea-pairing-chart/>*

A tea pairing chart looks like a rulebook and is really a starting point for one simple principle. Here is the chart and, more usefully, how to use it. This sits at the centre of the pairing cluster beside [tea and food pairings](#).

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

The principle first

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for The principle first, The Tea Pairing Chart (How to Actually Use It). Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/tea-pairing-chart/>*

Match intensity, then echo or contrast flavour. Two tools do most of the work: astringency (tannin) in strong tea cuts through fatty, rich food (cheese, smoked salmon, buttery scones); aromatic top notes in flavoured tea (Earl Grey's bergamot, jasmine's florals) echo similar notes in food (lemon desserts, floral cakes). Every row of any chart is an application of that, which is why the principle matters more than memorising the grid, see the chart below.

Black tea

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Black tea, The Tea Pairing Chart (How to Actually Use It). Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/tea-pairing-chart/>*

Robust, astringent: pairs with rich, sweet, fatty and baked food, breakfast, cake, cheese, chocolate. The great all rounder, see [tea with cake](#).

Green tea

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Green tea, The Tea Pairing Chart (How to Actually Use It). Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/tea-pairing-chart/>*

Fresh, low astringency: pairs with light, savoury, marine and vegetal food, sushi, salads, steamed dishes, see [tea with sushi](#) and [what to eat with green tea](#).

Oolong

Source: [Teas.co.uk](#). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Oolong, The Tea Pairing Chart (How to Actually Use It). Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/tea-pairing-chart/>*

Floral to roasted: lighter oolong with fruit and pastry, roasted oolong with grilled and savoury, a versatile middle, see [oolong](#).

White tea

Source: [Teas.co.uk](#). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for White tea, The Tea Pairing Chart (How to Actually Use It). Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/tea-pairing-chart/>*

Delicate: only with very light, subtle food, or alone, anything rich erases it, see [white tea](#).

Chai and spiced

Warm spice: pairs with spiced bakes, curry, autumnal and sweet spiced food, see [tea with curry](#).

Herbal

By character: mint with chocolate, fruit with desserts, camomile with light bakes; pair the dominant note, see [tea and dessert](#).

What it boils down to

Use the chart to start, then weight match and decide echo or contrast. The principle, not the grid, makes you good at pairing, see [the tasting guide](#).

In short: Tea pairing chart

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Tea type	Pairs well with
Strong black tea (Assam, English Breakfast)	Bacon sandwiches, fry-ups, scones with jam, fruit cake, digestive biscuits, Cheddar cheese
Earl Grey	Lemon drizzle cake, shortbread, smoked salmon, Victoria sponge, lemon tart
Green tea (sencha, longjing)	Sushi, sashimi, steamed dumplings, rice dishes, light fish, fresh fruit
Light oolong (Tieguanyin)	Dim sum, mild cheeses, almond biscuits, light salads, summer fruits
Dark oolong (Da Hong Pao)	Roasted nuts, dark chocolate, smoked meats, Chinese roasted duck

Tea type	Pairs well with
White tea	Fresh fruits, light pastries, delicate biscuits, vanilla desserts
Chai and spiced	Indian sweets (gulab jamun, kulfi), spiced biscuits, curry dishes, gingerbread
Herbal (mint, chamomile)	Light evening snacks, oat-based biscuits, end-of-meal closers
Pu-erh	Rich meats, dim sum, dark chocolate, savoury cheeses

What to buy to explore pairings

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for What to buy to explore pairings, The Tea Pairing Chart (How to Actually Use It). Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/tea-pairing-chart/*

Build a small range across categories and test the chart for yourself. Black for rich and baked food: [Yorkshire Tea](#) or a strong [English Breakfast](#). Citrus echoes: [Earl Grey](#) with lemon bakes. Light and savoury food: [green tea](#); delicate fruit and pastry: [white tea](#). Spiced bakes and curry: [masala chai](#). After-dinner closers: [peppermint and chamomile](#). 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

- [Tea and food pairings](#)
- [What tea with breakfast](#)
- [Tea with cake](#)
- [Practical tea tasting guide](#)

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- [Oolong tea](#)
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- [Caffeine in tea](#)

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