How to Make Tea in a Hotel Room

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Making tea in a hotel room, in summary:** Hotel tea really is worse and you are not imagining it: clean the kettle by boiling and binning water, boil fully, steep longer, bring decent bags.

Hotel room tea is a survival skill. On the travel side of the tea pages it sits near best tea to take travelling.

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

Tea in a hotel room, at a glance

Problem	The fix
The enemy	A coffee-tainted, under-powered, half-descaled hotel kettle
First step	Boil and discard one or two kettles of water to clean it
Heat & time	Boil fully, brew a touch longer to offset a weak kettle
Bring your own	Decent bags from home beat the tray sachets
No kettle	Bathroom tap rarely hot enough; ask for water that is actually boiling

The enemy

Hotel-room tea really is worse, and you are not imagining it. The in room kettle is the main culprit: usually low powered, so it struggles to reach and hold a proper boil; often half descaled, so the water tastes of limescale; and almost always used for instant coffee and pot noodles, leaving a residue that taints tea far more than it taints coffee. Add unfamiliar water, UHT milk pots and the cheapest sachet the hotel could buy, and the cup is sabotaged before you start.

Clean the kettle first

The single highest-impact fix is to clean the kettle before you trust it: fill, boil and discard a full kettle of water once or twice. That clears most of the coffee taint and loosens loose scale, and it costs you two minutes. Do it on arrival and the rest of the trip's tea is transformed.

Heat, time and your own bags

Then maximise heat and time, and bring your own tea. Let the weak element reach as full a boil as it can, use the water immediately, and steep a little longer than at home to compensate for water that was never quite hot enough. Above all, bring your own bags: a dozen decent ones weigh nothing in a suitcase and beat the stale tray sachet by a wide margin. See packing teabags.

Milk strategy

Have a milk plan, because the UHT pot is the weak link. UHT is tolerable in a strong brew, but black or with lemon often beats bad UHT, and buying a small bottle of fresh milk locally is the real upgrade if you are staying a while. See milk in tea.

No kettle, and the travel kit

If there is no kettle at all, do not use the bathroom hot tap: it is rarely hot enough to brew properly and carries hygiene questions. Better to ask reception or room service for water that is properly boiling, use a breakfast hot water urn, or, for frequent travellers, carry a small dual voltage travel kettle, which is the lasting fix and pays for itself quickly. The packable kit is tiny: a dozen decent bags or a small tin of sturdy loose tea with a collapsible infuser, plus a few UHT pods so you are not at the mercy of the tray. See travel kit.

What to buy

Pack something sturdy that survives a bad cup: a strong black tea or breakfast blend, or travel-friendly bags from the full tea shop.

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