

Afternoon Tea Menu Ideas

From the Teas.co.uk wiki

Afternoon tea menu ideas, in summary: Afternoon tea menu ideas: small fresh sandwiches, warm scones with cream and jam, a few good small sweets, and a brisk tea to cut it.

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for Afternoon Tea Menu Ideas. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/afternoon-tea-menu-ideas/>*

A great afternoon tea menu is small, fresh and balanced across three courses. This sits in the afternoon tea cluster beside [how to host](#).

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

The classic spread, tier by tier

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for The classic spread, tier by tier, Afternoon Tea Menu Ideas. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/afternoon-tea-menu-ideas/>*

Tier	What goes on it	The rule
Bottom: savoury	Finger sandwiches, crusts off: cucumber, egg mayo and cress, smoked salmon, coronation chicken, cheese and pickle	Small and fresh
Middle: scones	Plain and fruit scones, warm, with clotted cream and good jam	The centrepiece
Top: sweet	Victoria sponge slices, lemon tart, macarons, fruit tartlets, mini eclairs	Variety over volume

Building the savoury tier

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Building the savoury tier, Afternoon Tea Menu Ideas. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/afternoon-tea-menu-ideas/>*

The bottom tier is finger sandwiches, crusts off and cut uniform: cucumber with butter, egg mayonnaise and cress, smoked salmon, coronation chicken, and cheese and pickle are the classics. One modest premium filling is plenty for a luxe feel; you do not need to be expensive across the board. They are eaten first because the palate should climb from salty upward, see [the three-tier order](#). Small and fresh beats large and

tired every time.

The scone centrepiece

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for The scone centrepiece, Afternoon Tea Menu Ideas. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/afternoon-tea-menu-ideas/*

The middle tier is the heart of the spread: plain and fruit scones, served warm, with proper clotted cream and a good fruit jam. Warm, fresh, genuine clotted cream, not aerosol, is the single biggest quality lever on the whole table. The jam-or-cream order is regional identity rather than an error, so offer both and let guests build it their own way. See [jam or cream first](#) and [tea with scones](#).

The sweet tier and the cup

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for The sweet tier and the cup, Afternoon Tea Menu Ideas. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/afternoon-tea-menu-ideas/*

The top tier is small and varied: Victoria sponge slices, lemon tart, macarons, fruit tartlets, mini eclairs, with variety of look and texture beating sheer volume. The tea is designed with the food rather than after it, a brisk black to cut the cream and sweetness plus a caffeine-free herbal so every guest is covered. See [what tea to serve](#) and [tea and dessert](#).

Quantities per guest

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Plan roughly three or four sandwich fingers, one or two scones and two or three small sweets per guest, with a generous pot share and refills. That is enough to feel abundant without waste. Afternoon tea is deliberately light, so guests should finish satisfied, not stuffed, which is the whole point of the elegant pause rather than a feast.

Make ahead, and dietary swaps

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Make ahead, and dietary swaps, Afternoon Tea Menu Ideas. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/afternoon-tea-menu-ideas/*

Freshness is the real quality lever, so stage the work: prep bakes and fillings ahead, assemble sandwiches within about ninety minutes of serving so the bread does not dry, and warm the scones last so they reach the table warm. Pastries can be bought; nobody minds a shop Battenberg if everything else is fresh. Gluten-free scones, vegan sandwiches and dairy-free cream are all straightforward, but plan one full alternative set rather than token tweaks so those guests get a complete spread.

Reading a good afternoon tea menu

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Reading a good afternoon tea menu, Afternoon Tea Menu Ideas. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/afternoon-tea-menu-ideas/*

The same principles let you judge a menu before you order. A strong spread names a proper loose-leaf tea selection rather than just "tea", offers a genuine caffeine-free option, lists warm scones with clotted (not whipped or aerosol) cream, keeps the savouries small and classic, and shows restraint on the sweet tier rather than a dozen near-identical fondant fancies. A weak one over-promises volume and under-delivers freshness. The simplest planning rule ties it together: decide the tea first, then build the three tiers to flatter it. A brisk black wants something to cut, the cream and the salt of the savouries; a delicate Darjeeling wants lighter fillings. Treating the cup as the organising choice, not an afterthought, is what turns a pile of nice food into a coherent afternoon tea.

What to buy

Build the menu around the cup: a brisk [English Breakfast](#) or another robust [black tea](#) to cut the cream, a delicate [Darjeeling](#) for lighter fillings, and a caffeine-free [herbal](#) so every guest is covered. Browse the full [tea shop](#); free UK delivery over £35.

Reference noted

- [EFSA Scientific Opinion on the Safety of Caffeine \(2015\)](#)

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FROM THE CURATOR *teas* · The cup you finish is the right cup. Skip the variety until that one is sorted.

Afternoon-tea reading

- [How to host an afternoon tea](#)
- [What tea to serve](#)
- [Tea with scones](#)
- [About afternoon tea](#)

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- [Herbal tea](#)
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