

# Jam or Cream First? The Regional, Not Right, Answer

From the Teas.co.uk wiki

**Jam or cream first, in summary:** Jam or cream first is regional, not right or wrong: Devon is cream first, Cornwall jam first, both correct; the only error is insisting one order is universal.

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for Jam or Cream First? The Regional, Not Right, Answer. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/jam-or-cream-first/*

It is one of Britain's most cheerfully heated food arguments, and the answer is that it is regional, not right or wrong. This sits in the afternoon tea cluster beside [Devon vs Cornwall](#).

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

## Quick reference: Devon vs Cornwall

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for Jam or Cream First? The Regional, Not Right, Answer. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/jam-or-cream-first/*

Method	Order	Texture	Region
Devon	Clotted cream first, jam on top	Richer, softer spread	Devon
Cornwall	Jam first, cream on top	Firmer base, neat cream peak	Cornwall

## The two camps, and why neither is wrong

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for The two camps, and why neither is wrong, Jam or Cream First? The Regional, Not Right, Answer. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/jam-or-cream-first/*

This is one of Britain's most cheerfully heated food arguments, and the answer is that it is regional identity, not right or wrong. The Devon method is clotted cream first, then jam on top. The Cornish method is jam first, then cream on top. Both are deeply held local tradition, and the single genuine mistake is insisting that one order is universally correct, which turns a charming piece of regional culture into a fake rule of etiquette it never was. There is a real practical angle underneath the rivalry, and it is texture rather than correctness:

jam first gives a firmer base and lets you finish with a neat peak of cream; cream first spreads richer and softer with the jam glossy over it. That is a genuine mouthfeel preference, which is why sensible people land on either side for reasons that have nothing to do with where they were born.

## How to host it, and why people care so much

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for How to host it, and why people care so much, Jam or Cream First? The Regional, Not Right, Answer. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/jam-or-cream-first/*

The host's move is simple and disarming: with mixed company, offer both jam and cream separately, name the two regional methods with a smile, and let everyone build their own, which converts a potential argument into a small piece of theatre. The order is a low-stakes proxy for regional pride, which is precisely why it is so endlessly searched and so enjoyable to argue: nobody really believes a cream tea is ruined by the wrong sequence, they enjoy the belonging the argument signals. Read as culture it is delightful; read as etiquette it becomes the one genuinely wrong thing you can do with a scone, which is to tell someone else theirs is wrong. See [how to host](#).

## What actually makes a great scone, in either order

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for What actually makes a great scone, in either order, Jam or Cream First? The Regional, Not Right, Answer. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/jam-or-cream-first/*

The order matters far less than the build, so be specific about what does matter. The scone should be fresh and ideally still slightly warm, with a soft, light crumb, neither dense nor dry; break it open with your hands rather than cutting it, which keeps the texture and is itself part of the tradition. Use a real fruit jam with proper set, strawberry or raspberry by custom, and genuine clotted cream rather than whipped or squirty, because the thick, almost buttery texture is the whole point of a West Country cream tea. Top each half mouthful by mouthful so the last bite is as good as the first, and pair it with a brisk black tea, an Assam or a breakfast blend, that cuts the richness, see [tea with scones](#). Get those right and a Devon build and a Cornish build are both excellent; get them wrong and no amount of "correct" ordering rescues it.

## What to buy

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for What to buy, Jam or Cream First? The Regional, Not Right, Answer. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/jam-or-cream-first/*

Set a proper cream tea around the cup: a brisk [English Breakfast](#) or another robust [black tea](#) to cut the richness, or browse the wider [loose leaf range](#). The full [tea shop](#) is open, with free UK delivery over £35.

## Reference noted

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Reference noted, Jam or Cream First? The Regional, Not Right, Answer. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/jam-or-cream-first/*

- [Encyclopaedia Britannica: Tea \(beverage\)](#)

## Afternoon-tea reading

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](#). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Afternoon-tea reading, Jam or Cream First? The Regional, Not Right, Answer. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/jam-or-cream-first/>*

- [Devon vs Cornwall cream tea](#)
- [Tea with scones](#)
- [How to host an afternoon tea](#)
- [About afternoon tea](#)

**FROM THE CURATOR** teas · Per-cup price is the only price that matters. Loose leaf usually wins; supermarket bags sometimes do too.

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