

Usucha vs Koicha, Explained

From the Teas.co.uk wiki

Usucha vs koicha, in summary: Usucha is thin everyday matcha; koicha is thick, kneaded ceremonial matcha that demands genuinely high grade and carries more caffeine per serving.

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for Usucha vs Koicha, Explained. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/usucha-vs-koicha/>*

Usucha and koicha are the two classic matcha preparations, and the difference is real. They are not a beginner-versus-expert ladder but two preparations for two moments. It sits alongside [matcha water ratio](#).

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

Note: matcha is whole powdered green tea, so it is meaningfully caffeinated. General information only; if you are caffeine sensitive, pregnant or medicated, moderate intake and check with a pharmacist.

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	Usucha (thin)	Koicha (thick)
Powder to water	Less powder, more water	Much more powder, little water
Texture	Light, frothy	Paint-like, syrupy
Whisk action	Brisk whisking to foam	Slow kneading, no foam
Grade needed	Good ceremonial style is plenty	High, smooth, low bitterness only
Caffeine	Moderate	Notably higher per serving
When	Everyday bowl	Ceremonial, deliberate

How to make each one

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for How to make each one, Usucha vs Koicha, Explained. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/usucha-vs-koicha/>*

Usucha is the bowl most people mean by matcha: roughly a level scoop of powder to a small bowl of water that is hot but well off the boil, whisked briskly in a light W or M motion until a fine even foam forms. It is

forgiving and quick. Koicha is a different discipline: several times the powder into only a little water, no foaming at all, worked slowly until it becomes a smooth, glossy, almost paint-like paste with no lumps. The single most common koicha failure is water that is too hot or powder that is not smooth enough, which turns an expensive preparation bitter and grainy. Cooler water and a properly sieved, smooth matcha fix it. See [matcha water ratio](#).

Why koicha demands ceremonial grade

Source: [Teas.co.uk](#). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Why koicha demands ceremonial grade, Usucha vs Koicha, Explained. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/usucha-vs-koicha/>*

Grade is optional-ish for usucha and non-negotiable for koicha. Thinned out and foamed, a slightly astringent culinary powder is drinkable in usucha; concentrated several-fold and kneaded thick in koicha, that same harshness becomes overwhelming and the drink is genuinely unpalatable. This is the one context where "ceremonial grade" is a functional requirement rather than marketing language, because koicha exposes every flaw with nowhere for it to hide. The history explains the split: koicha is the formal heart of a tea gathering, a single thick bowl traditionally shared and made only with the finest matcha, while usucha is the lighter, more sociable everyday preparation. Look for a vivid, almost electric green and a recent milling date; dull khaki powder is stale and will be bitter however carefully you whisk. See [what is matcha](#).

Caffeine, and which to make

Source: [Teas.co.uk](#). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Caffeine, and which to make, Usucha vs Koicha, Explained. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/usucha-vs-koicha/>*

Because you drink the whole leaf as powder, matcha is meaningfully caffeinated, and koicha, using several times the powder per serving, carries a notably higher load than a bowl of usucha. The L-theanine in matcha can make that caffeine feel smoother for some people, but smoother is not smaller, so treat a thick koicha as a strong serving and time it accordingly. For everyday drinking, make usucha: it is forgiving, quick and the default. Save koicha for when you have genuinely high-grade powder and the intent to make it. See [matcha jitters](#).

What to buy

Source: [Teas.co.uk](#). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for What to buy, Usucha vs Koicha, Explained. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/usucha-vs-koicha/>*

If usucha is all you will make, a solid mid ceremonial-style matcha is plenty. If koicha is the goal, treat grade as a hard requirement. Browse the [matcha range](#) and a [matcha whisk](#), or the full [tea shop](#). Buy on the cup and the per cup price, never the marketing; free UK delivery is over £35.

Reference noted

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

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Matcha reading

- [Matcha water ratio](#)
- [Matcha explained](#)
- [Matcha jitters](#)
- [Green tea](#)

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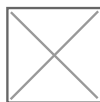
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