Reishi Tea: The Lingzhi Mushroom Guide

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Reishi tea, in summary:** Reishi is a Ganoderma lucidum mushroom infusion (not true tea) with 2,000 years of traditional use, preliminary evidence, and a real blood-thinning interaction to check.

Reishi ("lingzhi") is one of the most famous functional mushrooms. It sits in the functional cluster alongside chaga tea.

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

> ***Important:*** *general information, not medical advice. These are functional botanicals, not true tea and not treatments. Evidence is mostly preliminary or traditional, and some interact with medication or are not advised in pregnancy. Check with a pharmacist or GP before using mushroom or adaptogen products, and stop if you react.*

Aspect	The note
What it is	Ganoderma lucidum, the lingzhi mushroom; herbal, not true tea
Traditional use	2,000+ years in Chinese and Japanese herbal medicine
Taste	Bitter, woody, earthy; most palates want sweetener
Caffeine	None; a herbal infusion of fungal extract
Evidence	Preliminary research on the body's defences; not conclusive
Common form	Dried slices, powder, extract capsules, blended tea bags
Safety asterisk	Possible blood-thinning interaction; get medical advice first

What it is, and the evidence

Reishi tea is a herbal infusion (not true Camellia sinensis tea) made from the dried Ganoderma lucidum mushroom, the lingzhi of traditional Chinese and Japanese medicine. It is bitter and woody, caffeine-free, and has a long history that motivates research rather than proving anything. On the evidence: small lab and human studies show some measurable but modest effects on the body's defences, and a few minor heart and sleep marker effects, but the popular cancer treatment and longevity claims are not supported in humans. Worth drinking for the tradition and curiosity with possible modest benefits; not a replacement for medical care. See tea myths debunked.

How to brew it

Reishi is a slow decoction, not a quick steep. For dried slices, simmer (not boil) 5-10g in 500ml of just-off-boil water, covered, for 30-45 minutes to draw out the polysaccharides and triterpenes, then strain; the slices can be re-decocted two or three times. Powder (1-2g stirred into hot water) is faster but gritty. The easiest entry point is a blended reishi tea bag (reishi with rooibos, cinnamon, ginger or liquorice), brewed five to seven minutes. Most palates need honey, cinnamon or ginger to soften the bitter, woody base. See herbal tea.

The safety asterisks

These are real, not boilerplate. The best-documented is the interaction with blood-thinning medication: reishi shows mild anti-platelet activity and may amplify warfarin, apixaban, rivaroxaban and similar anticoagulants, with case reports of INR shifts, so anyone on these should consult their GP before regular use. Also: pregnant and breastfeeding women are advised to avoid it (insufficient data); people with low blood pressure should monitor (it may lower it further); those on medicines that suppress the body's defences should check; and anyone with a mushroom allergy should obviously avoid it. For healthy adults at moderate doses it is broadly safe, with mild digestive upset the main first-week effect.

What to buy

Explore reishi and other functional-mushroom infusions across the tea shop. Judge reishi by the cup you brew and what each cup costs, never the longevity marketing; UK delivery is free over £35.

Reference noted

- Encyclopaedia Britannica: Tea (beverage)

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