Hojicha vs Matcha: Roasted Comfort vs Shaded Lift

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Hojicha vs matcha, in summary:** Both are Japanese green at opposite extremes. Matcha is shaded, intense and clearly caffeinated; hojicha is roasted, mellow and a good deal lower in caffeine, the easy evening cup.

Hojicha and matcha are both Japanese green tea but feel like opposites. This sits in the comparison cluster beside green tea vs matcha.

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

Why roasting flips the character

Both start as Japanese green tea, but they are taken to opposite extremes. Matcha is shaded before harvest to build sweetness, umami and L-theanine, then stone milled to a whole-leaf powder. Hojicha is the opposite move: leaf or stem roasted at high heat until the grassy, astringent green character is converted into nutty, caramelised, toasty warmth, the process the hojicha guide details. Same plant family, opposite engineering, which is exactly why they feel like opposites in the cup despite a shared origin. Hojicha is a relatively modern Kyoto innovation, roasting lower-grade leaf and stem to make something delicious and low caffeine from material that would otherwise be undervalued, so it was designed as the gentle, comforting, everyday cup, not a luxury, and certainly not failed matcha.

Side by side

	Matcha	Hojicha
Processing	Shade grown, whole leaf powdered	Roasted leaf or stem
Caffeine	Meaningful, on the higher side	Much lower (roasting)
Taste	Grassy, umami, intense	Toasty, caramel, mellow
Bitterness	Can be brisk	Very low, smooth
Time of day	Earlier, for a lift	Later or evening, comfort
Prep	Whisked suspension	Steeped or latte, forgiving

Caffeine: the real practical gap

This is the difference that decides most real choices. Matcha is whole powdered leaf and clearly caffeinated; roasting pushes hojicha a good deal lower, which is why hojicha is the classic evening Japanese green and matcha is not, the point the hojicha guide makes. Lower is not the same as caffeine free: hojicha is still real tea, so if you need no caffeine at all you want a tisane, the distinction the caffeine guide keeps precise.

Brewing each one

Prep difficulty is part of the choice. Matcha has to be whisked into a fine suspension with hot but not boiling water, a small routine that pays off with a fresh, brightly coloured tin, the freshness logic in what is matcha. Hojicha is far more forgiving: because roasting has already removed most astringency, it tolerates hot water, is very hard to make bitter, and works simply steeped or as an easy latte. Both make popular lattes, for different reasons, a matcha latte keeps a real caffeine load and a grassy edge under the milk, while a hojicha latte is naturally sweet, toasty and low caffeine. Sweetened cafe versions of either are dessert-level; made at home you control that.

Who each suits, across a day

The simplest way to use this pair is by the clock. Matcha earlier, in the morning or early afternoon, when you want the lift and do not mind a real dose of caffeine and a short whisking routine. Hojicha later, afternoon into evening, when you want warmth and comfort without a stimulant hit and with almost no effort, and it is the safer pick for the caffeine sensitive within true tea, though "low" is not "zero". Many households keep both and switch by time of day, which is the realistic recommendation rather than crowning one.

Common questions

Are hojicha and matcha the same plant? Both are Japanese green tea, taken to opposite extremes, shaded and powdered versus roasted. Same family, opposite character.

Is hojicha caffeine free? No, lower, not zero. Roasting reduces caffeine but hojicha is still true tea. For zero, drink a tisane.

Which is better in the evening? Hojicha, comfortably. It is mellow, with little bitterness, and a good deal lower in caffeine than matcha.

Is hojicha easier to make? Yes. It steeps simply and is hard to make bitter, while matcha needs whisking and fresh powder.

Want one of each?

Keep a fresh matcha for the whisked morning cup and a good hojicha for the easy evening steep or latte, both from the wider Japanese green range. Compare the pair by what each cup costs, and UK orders over £35 are delivered free.

Browse the tea range

Reference noted

- PubMed: Matcha green tea and human health

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · Start with the cheaper one; stay there until it lets you down. Most rich teas reward patience, not budget.

More from the tea wiki

- Green tea vs matcha
- Hojicha
- Matcha vs coffee
- What is matcha
- The caffeine guide
- Japanese green tea

Earn rewards on teas.co.uk

Earn loyalty points on every order. Free to join.

+100 pts

Create your free account

Welcome bonus + earn on every order.



100 pts = 1 tree

Plant a tree in Scotland

Pledge points to our reforestation partner.



teas.co.uk · Tunbridge Wells, Kent · hello@teas.co.uk · 3-click cancel at teas.co.uk/cancel/