Tea for a Summer Party: Cold Brew Wins

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Tea for a summer party, in summary:** Cold brew is the practical winner: a big batch made overnight, naturally smooth and food-safe. Offer caffeinated and caffeine-free, keep it chilled, let guests sweeten their own, and make a jug with citrus and mint the centrepiece.

Tea is an underrated summer party drink. This sits in the occasion cluster beside tea for a dinner party.

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

Why tea works in summer

Cold brew, iced tea and fruit infusions are refreshing, low or no alcohol, and scale to a crowd easily. Cold tea contributes to hydration, pairs happily with BBQ, salads and summer fruit, and signals more thought than a bottled-drinks default, all at an economical cost per serving. The increasing preference for good non-alcoholic options at parties makes it an elegant choice beyond plain water.

The numbers and method

Aspect	Answer
Cold brew method	15g tea per 1L cold water, 8-12 hour fridge steep, strain, serve
Cold brew benefits	naturally smooth, no astringency, no over-extraction risk, batch-ready
Iced tea method	hot-brew at double strength, pour over ice to chill, serve over fresh ice
Good teas	Ceylon, English Breakfast, sencha, oolong, fruit, hibiscus
Avoid	heavily roasted teas and heavy chai (too warming for summer)
Quantity	roughly 250-300ml per person, allow 2-3 servings in outdoor heat

Cold brew vs iced tea

Cold brew is set-and-forget: combine leaf and cold water in a jug, refrigerate overnight, strain and serve all day, the method the cold brew tea guide details. Cold extraction is gentle, so it is smooth, low in bitterness and forgiving even if it steeps a little long. Traditional iced tea, hot-brewed at double strength and poured straight over ice, has more kick but is less forgiving: over-steeping during the cool-down turns it bitter and weak hot-brew followed by melting ice turns it watery, so it needs timing and suits robust black teas, the iced tea guide explains. For a relaxed party, cold brew is the easier path to quality. If you want it chilled fast, the

flash chill method also works.

Food safety

Prepared tea is a food product. Keep cold tea below 8C, consume it within about 24 hours of brewing, and discard any batch that turns cloudy, which signals microbial activity. Pre-sweetened tea is at higher risk because sugar feeds microbes, so serving sweetener separately is safer as well as more flexible. Avoid warm "sun tea" for a party: use cold brew or hot-brew-then-chill instead, which is the safer choice, the point the sun tea safety guide makes. Refresh dispensers with fresh tea every few hours during a long outdoor party.

Caffeine-free options and presentation

Modern crowds have varied preferences, so offer two or three caffeinated and two or three caffeine-free options. Hibiscus gives a vivid tart pink, fruit infusions are sweet without sugar, peppermint is refreshing and aids digestion, and rooibos is a sweet base that pairs with citrus. Presentation does the rest: big glass dispensers or jugs that show the colour, large clear ice cubes (mint or berries frozen in look striking), and garnishes of citrus, mint, cucumber or berries make tea a centrepiece for little cost. Label the dispensers so guests can pick by caffeine, and set out sugar, honey or simple syrup so everyone sweetens to taste rather than facing a pre-sweetened sugar bomb.

Common questions

What is the easiest tea for a crowd? Cold brew. Make a big batch overnight, strain, and serve all day. It is smooth and hard to get wrong.

Is iced tea different from cold brew? Yes. Iced tea is hot-brewed strong then chilled over ice, with more kick but more risk of bitterness. Cold brew is gentler and more forgiving.

What about food safety? Keep it below 8C, drink within 24 hours, discard if cloudy, and serve sweetener separately since sugar raises the risk.

Should I pre-sweeten? No. Let guests sweeten their own, which suits diverse tastes and is safer for a big jug standing in the heat.

Stock the summer jug

Cold-brew a striking hibiscus, a clean sencha or a caffeine-free peppermint from the full tea shop. Make it overnight, keep it chilled, and free UK delivery is over £35.

Browse the tea range

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teas · The infusion is more important than the shop. A short careful brew can lift a budget bag past a careless premium one.

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