Tea for a Cough

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Tea and a cough, in short:** honey in a warm cup is the genuinely evidence-backed home remedy for an acute cough, often as good as over-the-counter syrups. Add lemon, ginger or thyme for comfort. It eases the cough, it does not treat a chest infection.

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

For an ordinary cough that comes with a cold, a hot drink with honey is the practical, evidence-backed choice. Honey soothes the tickle and is recommended ahead of many cough medicines for adults and children over one.

Honey is the standout

For acute coughs, honey is recommended as a first thing to try, and is often as effective as over-the-counter cough remedies. A spoon stirred into warm tea is the easy way to take it. Honey should not be given to babies under one year old. See the NHS guide to coughs and Wikipedia: honey.

Comforting additions

- **Lemon.** Pairs with honey; pleasant and refreshing.
- **Ginger.** Warming, good if the cough comes with a chill or queasiness.
- **Thyme and peppermint.** Traditional for coughs and a clearer-feeling chest; comforting via warm steam.

Warmth and steam

The warmth and steam of any hot drink help a tickly cough feel easier and keep you hydrated, which thins mucus. Sip slowly and keep the cup comfortably warm rather than scalding.

At a glance

Cup	For a cough
Honey (in warm tea)	Best evidence; quietens the tickle
Honey and lemon	Soothing, pleasant
Ginger	Warming comfort

Cup	For a cough
Thyme / peppermint	Traditional; clearer-feeling chest

FAQ

Best tea for a cough? Any warm cup with a spoon of honey; add lemon to taste.

Is honey really as good as cough medicine? For ordinary acute coughs it is recommended to try first and often works as well.

Can I give honey tea to a child? Yes over the age of one, never under one year old.

When should I see a GP? If a cough lasts more than three weeks, brings up blood, or comes with breathlessness or chest pain, get medical advice.

This is general information, not medical advice. A persistent cough should be checked by a GP or pharmacist.

FROM THE CURATOR

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

Sources

- NHS: cough
- Wikipedia: honey

Part of: Tea for Colds & Flu

- Tea for colds and flu (overview)
- Tea for a sore throat
- Tea for a hangover

Related reading

- Ginger tea
- Peppermint tea
- Herbal tea overview

Shop comforting teas: lemon & ginger, peppermint, the herbal & fruit range, or the full tea shop (free UK postage over £35).

More from the tea wiki

- Green tea
- Black tea
- Oolong tea
- White tea
- Herbal tea
- Caffeine in tea
- How to make tea properly
- Loose leaf vs teabag

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