

# Lapsang Souchong

From the Teas.co.uk wiki

**Lapsang Souchong, in summary:** Lapsang Souchong is pine-smoke-dried Fujian black tea, a deliberate processing identity not a flavouring, bold and divisive, with quality varying.

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for Lapsang Souchong. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/lapsang-souchong-explained/>*

Lapsang Souchong is the most polarising famous tea; here is the short version. This sits in the named tea cluster beside [Keemun](#).

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

## What it is

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for What it is , Lapsang Souchong. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/lapsang-souchong-explained/>*

A black tea from the Wuyi area of Fujian, traditionally dried over pinewood smoke, which gives its signature character; see [black tea](#).

## Why it tastes smoky

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Why it tastes smoky , Lapsang Souchong. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/lapsang-souchong-explained/>*

The pinewood smoke drying is a deliberate processing choice, not a flavouring added later. That is the entire identity: smoke applied intentionally at the drying stage, which is why the character is so emphatic.

## Unsmoked and lightly smoked

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Unsmoked and lightly smoked , Lapsang Souchong. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/lapsang-souchong-explained/>*

Traditional unsmoked or lightly smoked Wuyi "souchong" also exists and is prized. "Lapsang" is the smoked style specifically; disliking the smoke is a verdict on one processing step, not on the whole Wuyi region.

## How to brew it

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for How to brew it , Lapsang Souchong. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/lapsang-souchong-explained/*

Boiling water, moderate steep. Robust and hard to over-bitter; takes milk for some drinkers, usually drunk without. First cup without milk to taste the layered base underneath the smoke.

## What to expect

Bold campfire and pine smoke over a black tea base; a love-it-or-hate-it profile. A good Lapsang has layered, woody smoke over a sweet, malty base that lingers pleasantly; a poor one is one-dimensional and acrid.

## The caveat

Cheap "Lapsang" can be crude, heavy smoke laid over poor leaf. Quality varies widely under the same name. Judge the cup, not the label or price alone; see [how to judge quality](#).

## Lapsang Souchong at a glance

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for Lapsang Souchong. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/lapsang-souchong-explained/*

Question	Answer
What is it?	Wuyi Fujian black tea, pinewood-smoke dried
Why smoky?	Deliberate processing, not added flavouring
Unsmoked exists?	Yes, prized Wuyi souchong; "Lapsang" = the smoked style
Brewing	Boiling water, moderate steep, hard to over-bitter
Expect	Bold campfire/pine smoke, love-it-or-hate-it
Caveat	Cheap = crude smoke on poor leaf; quality varies widely

## Common questions

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Common questions , Lapsang Souchong. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/lapsang-souchong-explained/*

**Is the smoke natural?** Yes. The smoking is a deliberate traditional processing step using pinewood, not a flavouring sprayed on afterwards. That is why the character is so deeply integrated into the tea.

**Why does some Lapsang taste harsh?** Grade and quality vary enormously. Low-grade Lapsang can be one-note acrid smoke over thin leaf. A mid-tier or specialist example shows the layered, sweet, malty base that makes the style worth trying.

**I do not like Lapsang; does that mean I dislike Wuyi teas?** No. Lapsang is specifically the smoked expression; unsmoked Wuyi souchong and the ultra-premium Jin Jun Mei are from the same region with no smoke at all.

## Quick take

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Quick take , Lapsang Souchong. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/lapsang-souchong-explained/*

Lapsang Souchong is worth trying deliberately at least once: a genuine, bold, pine-smoke-dried identity, not a gimmick. Quality varies widely, so go for a mid-tier or specialist example, try it without milk first, and decide clearly whether the smoke is for you. If not, the region has unsmoked alternatives worth exploring. Explore the [black tea range](#) or the full [tea shop](#).

## Reference noted

- [PubMed: Green tea catechins and human health](#)

**FROM THE CURATOR** *teas* · Match the tea to the moment. A 6am cup and a 4pm cup do not need to be the same brew.

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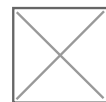
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