

Chai Concentrate

From the Teas.co.uk wiki

Chai concentrate, in summary: A chai concentrate is a strong brewed base you dilute with milk; convenient, and only as sweet as you make it.

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for Chai Concentrate. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/chai-concentrate/>*

Chai concentrate is a strong, pre brewed spiced tea base that you keep in the fridge and dilute with hot milk or water a cup at a time. It sits sensibly between two extremes: simmering a fresh pot from scratch every morning, which is lovely but slow, and a sugary instant powder, unlike a proper [chai latte](#), which is fast but tastes of it. Made well, a concentrate gives you most of the quality of the from scratch version at most of the speed of the instant one, which is why it is the format worth understanding.

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

What it actually is

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for What it actually is , Chai Concentrate. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/chai-concentrate/>*

A concentrate is just a normal [masala chai](#) decoction, made as on the [how to make chai](#) page, taken further: more tea, more spice, less water, no milk, simmered longer and then strained and cooled. Because the milk is added fresh at serving time rather than stored, the base keeps for several days without the dull, cooked milk taste that ruins a fully made chai left in the fridge. You are storing the hard part, the spiced tea, and doing only the easy part, heating milk, on the day.

Sweetened or unsweetened

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Sweetened or unsweetened , Chai Concentrate. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/chai-concentrate/>*

Leave the concentrate unsweetened. It is tempting to sugar the batch for convenience, but an unsweetened base is far more useful: you can sweeten each cup to taste, use it in cooking, make a [savoury leaning version](#), or hand it to someone who takes no sugar. Sweetened concentrate locks you into one decision for the whole batch and tends to taste cloying after a day or two in the fridge. Sweeten the cup, never the jar.

How to make a proper batch

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for How to make a proper batch , Chai Concentrate. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/chai-concentrate/*

For roughly a week for one person: lightly crush 12 green cardamom pods, a 6cm piece of fresh ginger, 2 cinnamon sticks, 6 cloves and a teaspoon of black peppercorns. Simmer the spices in 750ml of water for about 10 minutes so they fully open. Add 6 heaped teaspoons of a strong black tea and simmer a further 4 to 5 minutes; you want it noticeably too strong to drink as is, because it will be cut roughly half and half with milk. Strain it through a fine sieve, cool it quickly, and keep it in a clean sealed bottle in the fridge for up to five days. To serve, heat equal parts concentrate and milk, sweeten the mug to taste, and drink.

A dilution guide

The concentrate to milk ratio is the dial that decides what you get. None of these is more correct than another; they are different drinks from one bottle.

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Concentrate : milk	Result	Good for
1 : 1	Rich, milky, dessert like	The classic comforting mug
2 : 1	Strong, tea forward, brisk	Morning, or with food
1 : 2	Mild, latte like, soft	An easy all day cup
1 : 1 with water	Lighter, no milk	A black spiced tea

Scaling, freezing and shelf life

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Scaling, freezing and shelf life , Chai Concentrate. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/chai-concentrate/*

The recipe scales linearly, so double or triple it in a bigger pan with no change to method. In the fridge a clean, well strained, unsweetened concentrate is reliably good for about five days and starts to taste flat after that. For longer storage it freezes well: pour it into an ice cube tray, freeze, and drop two or three cubes into a mug of hot milk on the day. Frozen this way it keeps for a couple of months with very little loss, which makes a single big weekend batch cover most of a month.

Troubleshooting a flat concentrate

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Troubleshooting a flat concentrate , Chai Concentrate. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/chai-concentrate/*

If the diluted cup tastes weak, the batch was almost certainly under strength to begin with; concentrate needs to taste aggressively too strong neat, because the milk will tame it hard. If it tastes only of clove or only of cinnamon, the spice balance was off before reduction and only got more concentrated, so adjust the next batch down on the dominant spice. If it turns dull within two days, it was probably not strained finely enough and fine sediment is stewing in the bottle; strain through a finer sieve or a cloth next time.

Homemade versus the bottles on the shelf

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Homemade versus the bottles on the shelf , Chai Concentrate. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/chai-concentrate/*

Shop bought concentrates vary widely. The better ones are genuinely brewed and only lightly sweetened; many are heavily sugared and taste much closer to the syrup cafe route than to a simmered pot. The advantage of making your own is total control of strength, spice and sugar at a fraction of the cost. The advantage of a good bottled one is obvious convenience. If you buy, read the label for where sugar sits in the ingredients list; if it is near the top, you are buying mostly syrup.

A recipe for the weekend: chai French toast

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for A recipe for the weekend: chai French toast , Chai Concentrate. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/chai-concentrate/*

Concentrate is a brilliant cooking ingredient because it is intense and milk free. Whisk 1 egg with 60ml of unsweetened chai concentrate and a teaspoon of sugar, soak thick slices of bread in it for a minute a side, and fry in butter until set and golden. The custard carries the cardamom, ginger and clove right through the bread in a way a sprinkle of cinnamon never manages. Served with banana and a little honey it is a weekend breakfast that genuinely earns the spice rack, and a far more interesting thing to do with a good tea than pour it down the sink.

Using it beyond the mug

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Using it beyond the mug , Chai Concentrate. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/chai-concentrate/*

An unsweetened concentrate is one of the most useful things in a fridge precisely because it is intense and milk free. It makes the custard for the chai French toast above, but it also goes much further. Reduce it with a little sugar and it becomes a chai syrup for drizzling over pancakes, porridge or [ice cream](#). Whisk it into a baked or stovetop custard for a spiced pouring cream. Use a splash in the liquid of a banana bread or a spiced loaf in place of milk for a warm background note. Soften it with hot water rather than milk and you have an instant black spiced tea for someone avoiding dairy. One bottle quietly does the work of a spice rack and a saucepan of effort.

A savoury direction

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for A savoury direction , Chai Concentrate. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/chai-concentrate/*

Less obvious, but worth trying: a small amount of strong, unsweetened concentrate adds depth to a few savoury dishes, particularly a lentil dal or a spiced squash soup, where the cardamom, clove and pepper read as seasoning rather than as tea. Use it sparingly, a tablespoon or two, as you would a spice paste rather than a stock. It is a good way to use the last of a batch that is approaching its five day limit.

Bottling, labelling and giving it away

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Bottling, labelling and giving it away , Chai Concentrate. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/chai-concentrate/*

A few practical habits make concentrate genuinely low effort. Cool the strained batch quickly rather than leaving it to sit warm, since fast cooling keeps it fresher for longer. Bottle it in a clean glass bottle or jar with a tight lid, and actually write the date on it, because an unsweetened concentrate looks much the same on day two and day seven and only tastes right for about five days. A well made batch in a nice bottle, with a tag giving the simple "equal parts hot milk, sweeten to taste" instruction, is also a genuinely good homemade gift, far more thoughtful than a [shop jar of powder](#) and made from nothing more than good tea and a handful of spice.

Common questions

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Can I make it caffeine free? Yes, use a [decaf](#) or rooibos base; the spice carries the drink, so it survives the swap well.

Why did mine go cloudy and sour? Either it was not cooled quickly before bottling or it was kept past five days. Cool fast, seal clean, label the date.

Hot milk or cold? Either. Hot for a normal mug; cold over ice for an instant iced chai, covered on our [iced chai](#) page.

The whole system depends on the strength of the leaf you brew the batch from. A robust, malty black from our [Assam teas](#), or a strong [breakfast blend](#), is the right base for a concentrate, because it stays clearly present even after it has been cut with milk in the mug or whisked into a custard in the pan.

Reference noted

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

Related teas worth a look: [English Breakfast](#), [Earl Grey](#), [green tea](#), [loose leaf tea](#), [Darjeeling](#), [oolong](#), and [herbal tea](#). Browse the wider [tea range](#); free UK shipping above £35, single bags upwards.

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