

# Tea Brewing Mistakes: Six Fixes for a Better Cup

From the Teas.co.uk wiki

**Tea brewing mistakes, in summary:** Most "bad tea" is good tea brewed badly. Six core mistakes account for nearly all of it, each with one clear, free fix: temperature, leaf quantity, time, re-steeping, storage and water.

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for Tea Brewing Mistakes: Six Fixes for a Better Cup. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/tea-brewing-mistakes/>*

The single most liberating fact about tea is that most "bad tea" is good tea brewed badly, and the mistakes responsible are few, specific and easy to fix. This page collects them in one place because the same handful of errors accounts for the overwhelming majority of disappointing cups, and naming each one with its single clear fix is more useful than any amount of vague advice to "brew it properly".

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

## Mistake 1: Boiling water on delicate tea

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Mistake 1: Boiling water on delicate tea , Tea Brewing Mistakes: Six Fixes for a Better Cup. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/tea-brewing-mistakes/>*

The most common and most damaging. Fully boiling water scalds green, white, yellow and fine oolong tea, stripping sweetness and forcing out bitterness, and is the number one reason people believe they dislike those teas when they have only ever tasted them scalded. The single fix: let the kettle cool for a few minutes (or add a splash of cold water) so delicate teas get roughly 70 to 85C, not 100C. Save the rolling boil for robust black tea and tisanes.

## Mistake 2: Over-steeping for "strength"

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Mistake 2: Over-steeping for "strength" , Tea Brewing Mistakes: Six Fixes for a Better Cup. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/tea-brewing-mistakes/>*

Leaving the bag or leaves in far too long, believing longer means stronger. It mostly means more bitterness, not more flavour, because a tea's pleasant compounds come out early while its harsh ones keep building.

The single fix: use more leaf for the correct time, not a small amount of leaf for a long time. Strength comes from the amount of leaf; time past the flavour window only adds harsh tannin.

### **Mistake 3: Too little leaf**

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Mistake 3: Too little leaf*, *Tea Brewing Mistakes: Six Fixes for a Better Cup*. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/tea-brewing-mistakes/>

The quiet opposite mistake: a stingy pinch of leaf brewed long to compensate, giving a cup that is simultaneously weak in body and bitter. The single fix: measure a proper amount (roughly 2 to 3g per cup, ideally weighed, because spoons mislead with fluffy or rolled leaf) and keep the time correct. Most thin, sour, unsatisfying tea is under-leafed, not under-brewed.

### **Mistake 4: One steep then bin**

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Mistake 4: One steep then bin*, *Tea Brewing Mistakes: Six Fixes for a Better Cup*. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/tea-brewing-mistakes/>

Throwing away whole-leaf tea after a single Western brew, discarding most of what it can give. The single fix: with good loose oolong, pu-erh, green, white or black, re-steep the leaves, keeping early steeps shorter so there is flavour left for later, often better, infusions. This is a value fix as much as a flavour one.

### **Mistake 5: Stale or badly stored tea**

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Mistake 5: Stale or badly stored tea*, *Tea Brewing Mistakes: Six Fixes for a Better Cup*. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/tea-brewing-mistakes/>

Blaming the brew when the leaf is the problem: tea kept for years in a clear jar by the hob, or matcha gone dull, simply cannot taste good however well you brew it. The single fix: buy in modest quantities, store sealed, opaque, cool, dry and away from odours, and drink it reasonably fresh, especially green tea and matcha, which stale fastest.

### **Mistake 6: Bad water**

The most overlooked. Tea is almost entirely water, and heavily chlorinated or very hard water genuinely flattens or dulls it. The single fix: if your tap water tastes of chlorine or is very hard, use filtered water. This is the one water upgrade that reliably improves the cup, and most other water mythology can be ignored beyond it.

### **The six mistakes, and the one fix each**

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for Tea Brewing Mistakes: Six Fixes for a Better Cup*. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/tea-brewing-mistakes/>

Mistake	Why it ruins the cup	The single fix
Boiling water on delicate tea	Scalds green/white/yellow/fine oolong, strips sweetness	Let it cool to 70 to 85C, or add a splash of cold
Over-steeping for "strength"	Adds bitterness, not flavour	More leaf for the correct time, not longer
Too little leaf	Weak body and sour at once	Weigh about 2 to 3g per cup, keep time correct
One steep then bin	Discards most of what good leaf gives	Re-steep; keep early steeps shorter
Stale or badly stored tea	No brew rescues dead leaf	Buy modest amounts; sealed, opaque, cool, dry
Bad water	Tea is almost all water; chlorine or very hard dulls it	Filter if tap tastes of chlorine or is very hard

None of these fixes requires expensive equipment or special skill, only knowing the six things that actually matter, temperature, leaf quantity, time, re-steeping, storage and water, and doing them deliberately. Almost every "this tea is not nice" verdict is one of these six errors, not the leaf, which is genuinely good news: improving your tea is a matter of knowledge applied deliberately rather than money spent. Get them right and ordinary tea tastes markedly better and good tea finally tastes like what you paid for, with the [brewing temperature](#) guide as the deepest single dial. A leaf worth the care is in the [loose leaf range](#) or the full [tea shop](#).

## Reference noted

- [EFSA Scientific Opinion on the Safety of Caffeine \(2015\)](#)

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

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for Tea Brewing Mistakes: Six Fixes for a Better Cup. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/tea-brewing-mistakes/*

## More from the tea wiki

- [Tea brewing temperature](#)
- [Tea-to-water ratio](#)
- [Tea steeping time](#)
- [Green tea](#)

## Earn rewards on Teas.co.uk

Earn loyalty points on every order. Free to join.

**+100 pts**

**Create your free account**

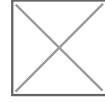
Welcome bonus + earn on every order.



**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](mailto:hello@teas.co.uk) · 3-click cancel at [teas.co.uk/cancel/](https://teas.co.uk/cancel/)