

Does Chai Tea Have Caffeine?

From the Teas.co.uk wiki

Chai caffeine, in short: Yes: real chai is spiced black tea, so it is caffeinated, and a "dirty chai" adds an espresso on top. The genuine caffeine-free exceptions are a rooibos base or a no-tea spiced blend. Read the base.

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for Does Chai Tea Have Caffeine?. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/does-chai-tea-have-caffeine/>*

The short answer is yes: traditional chai contains caffeine, because real chai is masala chai, spiced milk tea built on a black tea base, and that black tea is genuine caffeinated *Camellia sinensis*. The spices add flavour, not caffeine; the caffeine is in the tea. The useful detail is how much, when it is more than you think, and the genuine caffeine-free exceptions, which this page states clearly.

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

Why chai has caffeine

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Why chai has caffeine , Does Chai Tea Have Caffeine?. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/does-chai-tea-have-caffeine/>*

"Chai" literally means "tea" in many languages, and the drink English speakers call chai is properly masala chai: black tea decocted with spices like cardamom, ginger, cinnamon and clove, plus milk and sweetener. The defining base is black tea, so chai is caffeinated like any black tea. The cosy, spiced, milky character makes chai feel gentle and soothing, which is exactly why its caffeine is so often underestimated; a clear guide flags that mismatch rather than letting the warmth imply decaf.

How much, in practice

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for How much, in practice , Does Chai Tea Have Caffeine?. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/does-chai-tea-have-caffeine/>*

The answer is "roughly black-tea level, but genuinely variable", typically less than a strong coffee yet enough to be a real lift and enough to affect sleep if you are sensitive and drink it late. The amount depends on how much tea is in the blend, the leaf, and how it is made: a strong decocted homemade masala chai brewed long can be fairly robust, while a weak teabag chai is milder. If you want it gentler, the levers are free: less

tea in the pot, a shorter simmer, or drink it earlier in the day; for true zero, move to a rooibos or no-tea base. As always, no single exact figure is reliable; brewing and recipe move it a lot.

Dirty chai: more, not less

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Dirty chai: more, not less , Does Chai Tea Have Caffeine?. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/does-chai-tea-have-caffeine/>*

The most important caffeine point about chai is the "dirty chai", a chai latte with a shot of espresso added. This stacks the coffee's caffeine on top of the tea's, so a dirty chai is a high-caffeine drink, not a gentle one, regardless of how soothing the spice makes it feel. Anyone choosing chai to reduce caffeine should specifically avoid a dirty chai; this is the single clearest caution this drink needs and the one the cosy image most hides.

The genuine caffeine-free exceptions

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for The genuine caffeine-free exceptions , Does Chai Tea Have Caffeine?. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/does-chai-tea-have-caffeine/>*

Frankness requires naming the real exceptions. A rooibos chai (or "red chai") uses a caffeine-free rooibos base instead of black tea: it genuinely is caffeine free and is a sound choice for the spiced-chai flavour without caffeine. A herbal "chai-spiced" blend with no tea base is likewise caffeine free. Turmeric "golden milk", often shelved near chai, contains no tea at all and is caffeine free. A cafe chai latte is a wildcard: its caffeine depends entirely on whether it is made from a brewed-tea concentrate, a syrup or a powder, so ask whether it is tea-based (caffeinated), rooibos-based (caffeine free) or carries an espresso shot (high). The rule is the usual one: read the base, black tea base means caffeinated; rooibos or no-tea base means caffeine free.

Chai caffeine by type, in one place

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Kind	Base	Caffeine
Traditional masala chai	black tea decocted with spice + milk	roughly black-tea level, variable, often a real lift
Dirty chai	chai latte + an espresso shot	high: coffee stacked on tea
Rooibos / "red" chai	caffeine-free rooibos + spice	none
No-tea spiced blend / golden milk	spice or turmeric, no tea	none

Kind	Base	Caffeine
Cafe latte / powder	concentrate, syrup or powder, varies	unpredictable, ask

Reference noted

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

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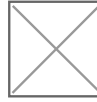
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