

Does Decaf Tea Have Caffeine?

From the Teas.co.uk wiki

Decaf caffeine, in short: Yes, a small residual amount: decaffeinated means most removed, not none. Negligible for most drinkers, but a naturally caffeine-free tisane is the answer if you need a true zero.

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

The short answer is the one a lot of products quietly avoid giving: yes, decaf tea still contains a small amount of caffeine. "Decaffeinated" does not mean caffeine free; it means most of the caffeine has been removed. For almost everyone that residual amount is trivial, but stating it clearly matters for the specific people who genuinely need to know, and this page does exactly that.

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

What "decaffeinated" actually means

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for What "decaffeinated" actually means , Does Decaf Tea Have Caffeine?. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/does-decaf-tea-have-caffeine/>*

Decaf is real tea (or coffee) that has been put through a process to strip out the large majority of its caffeine. By common standards a decaffeinated tea has had the great bulk of its caffeine removed, but a small residual amount remains, typically just a few milligrams per cup, versus the tens of milligrams in regular tea. So decaf is accurately described as "very low caffeine", not "no caffeine", and any product or person implying decaf is an absolute zero is overstating it.

How much remains, in practice

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The answer is "a small, usually negligible amount, but not nothing", and it varies by the tea and the decaffeination method. It is low enough that for the typical drinker it has no practical stimulant effect and will

not disturb sleep, which is the genuine, reassuring part. It is not, however, a guaranteed clinical zero, which is the part that matters for a minority and which an honest guide refuses to gloss over.

Who should genuinely care

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Who should genuinely care , Does Decaf Tea Have Caffeine?. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/does-decaf-tea-have-caffeine/*

This is where frankness earns its place. For most people, decaf's residual caffeine is irrelevant and decaf is a perfectly good way to enjoy tea in the evening. But for people who must avoid caffeine essentially completely, certain medical situations, particular sensitivities, or strict medical advice, "very low" is not the same as "zero", and they should know that decaf tea is not a true caffeine-free product. For them the answer is not decaf at all but a naturally caffeine-free tisane (rooibos, peppermint, chamomile, fruit infusions), which genuinely contains no caffeine because no caffeine plant is involved.

Does the method change the answer

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Does the method change the answer , Does Decaf Tea Have Caffeine?. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/does-decaf-tea-have-caffeine/*

A practical detail: different decaffeination methods (CO₂, ethyl acetate, water process) differ mainly in how much flavour they preserve, not in making the result a true zero; all leave a small residual. So choosing a "naturally decaffeinated" or premium-method decaf may give a better-tasting cup but does not change the core fact that a trace of caffeine remains. The useful distinction to fix is that "decaf" and "caffeine free" are not synonyms: decaf is real tea with most of its caffeine removed (always a trace), while caffeine free means a plant that never had caffeine (a true tisane, none at all). Brew decaf exactly as the normal version and accept a slightly softer cup as the fair trade.

Regular, decaf and tisane, compared

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Drink	Caffeine per cup
Regular black/green tea	tens of milligrams
Decaf tea	a few milligrams, very low, not nil
Naturally caffeine-free tisane genuine zero	

Reference noted

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

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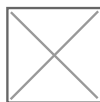
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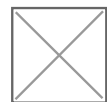
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