How Much Caffeine Is in Iced Tea?

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Iced tea caffeine, in short:** Iced tea caffeine tracks the base, swung by dilution and brew; cold brew is lower. For bottled iced tea the bigger issue is usually sugar, not caffeine.

The short answer is that the caffeine in iced tea depends entirely on what tea it was made from and how, so there is no single number, and the most useful clear point is that with bottled and cafe iced tea the bigger story is usually sugar, not caffeine. This page separates the two clearly.

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

Why iced tea has no single number

"Iced tea" is just tea served cold; it is not a separate drink with its own caffeine. So the answer tracks the base: iced black tea is moderate (black tea level), iced green is usually a bit less and variable, iced herbal or fruit "tea" is caffeine free because it is not true tea, and iced decaf is very low but not zero. The dilution by ice, and how strong it was brewed to survive that ice, then swing it further. Quoting one figure for "iced tea" is meaningless without knowing the base.

The brewing and dilution point

A practical detail: good iced tea is often brewed stronger than hot tea precisely because melting ice dilutes it, so a well made iced black tea can deliver a fair amount of caffeine despite tasting refreshing and cold. Cold brewed iced tea is the interesting exception: cold water extracts caffeine more slowly, so tea that is brewed cold is typically lower in caffeine than the same tea brewed hot, a real and useful reduction, though still not zero for real tea.

The bottled iced tea reality

This is the heart of it for most people. Commercial bottled and canned iced teas vary enormously in caffeine, from fairly caffeinated to nearly none (some are mostly flavoured sugar water with little actual tea), and the label is the only reliable guide. But the more important clear point, consistent across this wiki, is that the headline issue with most sweetened bottled iced tea is not caffeine at all, it is sugar: many behave more like soft drinks than like tea. If you are watching caffeine, read the label; if you are watching sugar, read it even more carefully.

The practical answer

For homemade iced tea, the caffeine is whatever the base tea and brew give, dialled by strength and dilution, and cold brew is the lower caffeine route. For bottled iced tea, caffeine is unpredictable and label dependent, and sugar is usually the bigger consideration. There is no clear single figure, only: know the base, know the method, and for bottled versions read the label for both caffeine and, especially, sugar. That eyes open approach is the accurate answer.

Iced tea caffeine by base

Iced tea	Caffeine
Iced black tea	moderate, black tea level
Iced green tea	usually a bit less, variable
Cold brewed tea	typically lower than the same tea brewed hot
Iced herbal / fruit	caffeine free, not true tea
Bottled / canned iced tea	unpredictable, label dependent; sugar is the bigger issue

References and notes

- NHS guidance on caffeine

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