Herbal Tea vs Green Tea

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Herbal tea vs green tea, in short:** Herbal tea vs green tea: green is caffeinated true tea, herbal is a caffeine free infusion of other plants. Different drinks for different moments.

The headline is that "herbal tea vs green tea" is slightly the wrong question, because they are not two versions of one thing: green tea is true tea (Camellia sinensis) and herbal "tea" is not tea at all but an infusion of other plants. The useful comparison is therefore about what that fundamental difference means for caffeine, character and when each is the right choice.

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

What they have in common

What they share is mostly the format: both are leaves or plant material steeped in hot water, both are drunk hot or cold, both are close to calorie free unsweetened, both count as fluid, and both bring a comforting routine that is real regardless of any claim. Judged as "a warm, flavourful, low or no sugar drink", they are equals, and that shared baseline is worth something.

The real differences

The clear differences are fundamental. Green tea contains caffeine (moderate, variable) and tea polyphenols; herbal tea (chamomile, peppermint, rooibos, fruit) is caffeine free because no caffeine plant is involved. Green tea has one broad flavour family (fresh, vegetal, grassy, sometimes nutty); herbal teas span an enormous flavour range and individual traditional uses that vary from gentle pleasure (ginger, hibiscus) to a few with real cautions (liquorice, concentrated botanicals). Green tea must be brewed cool and short or it turns bitter; most herbal infusions want fully boiling water and a long steep. They are really different drinks for different moments, not rivals on one scale.

Which should you choose

Choose green tea when you want a gentle caffeine lift with a fresh, clean character, daytime, not too late if you are sensitive. Choose a herbal infusion when you want caffeine free (evening, caffeine avoiders, more relaxed any time drinking), a specific flavour or traditional comfort, or simply variety. Many sensible drinkers keep both: green for the day, a tisane for the evening. Neither is "better"; they answer different needs.

Quick take

The clear verdict: this is not a contest with a winner. Green tea is caffeinated true tea with a clean character; herbal tea is a caffeine free infusion family with huge flavour range and case by case traditional value. Pick by caffeine, time of day and the flavour you want, brew each by its own rules, keep the sugar out, and treat both as the good, modest everyday drinks they are.

Green tea and herbal side by side

	Green tea	Herbal tisane
Plant	True tea, Camellia sinensis	Other plants entirely
Caffeine	Moderate, variable	Caffeine free (no caffeine plant)
Flavour	One family: fresh, vegetal, grassy	Enormous range
Brewing	Cool and short or it turns bitter	Usually full boil, long steep
Best for	Gentle daytime caffeine lift	Caffeine free, evening, variety

References and notes

- Britannica: Tea (beverage)

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