Rooibos vs Green Tea

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Rooibos vs green tea, in short:** Rooibos vs green tea: green is caffeinated true tea, rooibos a caffeine-free South African herb. Different bushes, different chemistry, when to pick each.

The headline is that rooibos and green tea are not really competitors: green tea is caffeinated true tea, rooibos is a caffeine free South African herb. The useful comparison is what that means for caffeine, taste and when each is the right choice, with both marketed beyond what they are.

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

What they have in common

What they share: both are steeped plant drinks, hot or cold, with almost no calories unsweetened, real comfort value, and the same overstated "superfood" marketing that this wiki consistently trims down to "pleasant drink, not a treatment".

The real differences

The real differences. Caffeine: green tea is caffeinated (moderate, variable); rooibos is reliably caffeine free. Tannin and bitterness: green tea turns bitter if scalded or over steeped and needs cool, short brewing; rooibos is naturally low tannin, smooth, and hard to over bitter, forgiving with boiling water and long steeps. Flavour: green is fresh, vegetal, grassy; rooibos is sweet ish, woody, mellow, and a common caffeine free base for "chai" and "Earl Grey" style blends. Health: both modest and real, neither a tonic.

Which should you choose

Choose green tea for a daytime caffeine lift with a clean, fresh character; choose rooibos for the evening, for caffeine avoiders, for a smooth low tannin cup that is impossible to brew harsh, or as a caffeine free base for spiced and flavoured blends. They really suit different times and needs; keeping both covers day and night.

Quick take

The clear verdict: not a contest. Green tea wins if you want caffeine and fresh character; rooibos wins if you want caffeine free, smooth and forgiving. Both are good, modest drinks oversold as superfoods. Pick by caffeine and time of day, brew each by its own rules (green cool and short, rooibos hot and long), keep the

sugar out, and ignore the superfood marketing for both.

Rooibos and green tea side by side

	Green tea	Rooibos
Plant	True tea, Camellia sinensis	South African herb, a tisane
Caffeine	Moderate, variable	Reliably caffeine free
Brewing	Cool and short or it turns bitter	Hot and long, hard to over bitter
Flavour	Fresh, vegetal, grassy	Sweet ish, woody, mellow
Best for	Daytime caffeine lift	Evening, caffeine free base

References and notes

- Britannica: Tea (beverage)

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · Try a cheap, plain rooibos or green first. Upgrade only once you know which of the two you like.

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