

Low caffeine tea: the clear list

From the Teas.co.uk wiki

Low-caffeine tea, in short: Low-caffeine tea, the ranked list: decaf, kukicha, hojicha, re-steeps, plus the white-tea myth. UK independent tea guide.

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for Low-caffeine tea: the clear list. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/low-caffeine-tea-the-clear-list/>*

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

"**Low caffeine**" and "**caffeine-free**" are not the same thing, and most lists muddle them. If you want genuinely zero caffeine, you want a [caffeine-free](#) infusion. If you want real tea from *Camellia sinensis* but gentler, this is the ranked list of what is actually lower in the cup, and the myths to ignore.

First, the distinction that matters

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Herbal infusions (rooibos, chamomile, peppermint, fruit) contain no caffeine at all because they are not tea. Decaffeinated tea is real tea with most caffeine removed, typically a few milligrams left. Genuinely "low-caffeine" real tea is a narrower list than the internet implies. See [decaf vs caffeine-free](#) for why the wording is not pedantry.

The genuinely lower real teas

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- **Decaf black or green:** the lowest real tea, usually around 2 mg a cup. The reliable choice for evening.
- **Kukicha (twig tea):** made from stems not leaf, so naturally among the lowest non-decaf options.
- **Hojicha:** roasted green tea; the roast and often older leaf make it gentle and a common evening pick.

- **Second and third infusions:** most caffeine leaves in the first steep, so a re-steeped leaf is materially lower.

The "white tea is low caffeine" myth

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White tea is frequently called low-caffeine. It is not reliably so. Because it is minimally processed and often made from young buds, some white teas are moderate to high. Treat white tea as variable, not safe-for-bedtime by default.

Brewing levers that lower caffeine

Caffeine extraction rises with hotter water, longer steeps and more leaf. Cooler water, a shorter steep, and a re-steep all pull the cup down. None of this turns black tea into a nightcap, but it shifts an afternoon cup in the right direction.

If you actually want zero

Go to the caffeine-free shelf: rooibos, [chamomile](#), [peppermint](#), fruit and most wellness blends. They are the only genuinely caffeine-free options and the right answer for sleep, pregnancy, or simply not wanting any.

Low-caffeine tea, at a glance

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Tea	Approx caffeine per cup
Decaf black/green tea	2-8mg. Lowest of any tea except herbal.
Herbal infusions (chamomile, peppermint, fennel)	0mg. Not from Camellia sinensis.
Rooibos	0mg. South African herb, naturally caffeine-free.
Honeybush	0mg. Caffeine-free.
Bancha (Japanese green)	10-20mg. Older leaf, lower caffeine.
Houjicha (roasted Japanese green)	10-15mg. Roasting reduces caffeine slightly.
Light first-brew oolong	15-30mg in a short steep. Re-steep gives even less.
White tea (Shou Mei, older leaf)	20-35mg. Note: Silver Needle is HIGH not low.
Lower than coffee always	Any tea (excluding mate and guayusa). Coffee is 80-150mg per cup.

Reference noted

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

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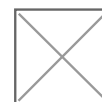
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