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.

Last reviewed by the teas.co.uk team in May 2026. Caffeine and pregnancy wording checked on 18 September 2026 .

"Low caffeine" and "caffeine-free" are not the same thing, and most lists muddle them. If you want no caffeine at all, 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

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. Real tea that is properly "low caffeine" 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

- **Decaf black or green**: the lowest real tea. Decaf still contains a little caffeine, and the amount varies by product and brew. From our shelf: Tetley Decaf English Breakfast, Tetley Decaf Pure Green and Twinings Pure Green Decaf.
- **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**: later steeps usually give less caffeine than the first, but a quick first rinse does not reliably decaffeinate tea.

The "white tea is low caffeine" myth

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 and fruit infusions. Check the ingredients of functional herbal blends, as some contain tea, mate or guarana. Caffeine free does not make a blend suitable for everyone: in pregnancy the NHS advises no more than 200mg of caffeine a day, no more than four cups of herbal tea a day, and steering clear of any tea containing liquorice root (NHS pregnancy guidance).

Low-caffeine tea, at a glance

Tea	Caffeine
Decaf black/green tea	Low, not zero; the amount varies by product and brew
Herbal infusions (chamomile, peppermint, fennel)	None, as they are not from Camellia sinensis, unless blended with tea
Rooibos	None; a South African herb, naturally caffeine-free
Honeybush	None
Bancha and houjicha (Japanese greens)	Often gentler than other green teas, but it varies
Oolong	Varies with the leaf and the steep
White tea	Varies widely; bud-heavy whites such as Silver Needle can be high

We don't give fixed milligram figures: caffeine in a cup depends on the leaf, the dose, the water temperature and the steep time.

Reference noted

- EFSA Scientific Opinion on the Safety of Caffeine (2015)
- NHS guidance on caffeine

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teas · If a lower caffeine tea here appeals, try it once. One cup will tell you more about caffeine than twenty articles.

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