How to make chai with oat milk (without it splitting)

From the teas.co.uk wiki

Oat chai is excellent (oats are naturally sweet and thick, which suits spice), but the pan is where it goes wrong. Oat drinks curdle when they are boiled hard, held at a rolling boil for a long time, or mixed with something acidic. The fix is the order you do things in.

The short version: use a barista oat drink, simmer the spices and tea in water first, then add the oat drink at the end and bring it back to just below a simmer.

The method

1. **Spices and water first.** Put 300ml water in the pan with your whole spices: a few crushed cardamom pods, a small piece of cinnamon, a slice of fresh ginger, a couple of cloves. Simmer for 5 minutes.
2. **Add the tea.** Two black tea bags, or 2 teaspoons of strong loose black tea. Brew for 2 to 3 minutes. A ready blend such as Tea India Masala Chai does both jobs in one bag.
3. **Add the oat drink.** Pour in 200ml barista oat and warm it until steaming, stirring. Do not let it boil hard.
4. **Sweeten and strain.** Sugar, honey or maple to taste, then strain into mugs.

That gives two mugs, with the tea strong enough to hold up to the oat drink.

Why barista oat works better

Barista versions are formulated to handle heat and acidity: they usually contain a little added oil and an acidity regulator, which is why they foam and stay smooth in coffee. Ordinary oat drink is thinner and more likely to separate when it hits hot, tannic tea. Oatly Barista Edition ingredients

If all you have is standard oat drink, warm it gently and add it to the tea rather than boiling the two together.

If it splits anyway

What happened	Likely cause	Next time
Fine grains appear as it heats	Boiled too hard	Keep it just below a simmer
Curdles as soon as it goes in	Very strong, acidic brew or a cold carton into a hot pan	Warm the oat drink first, or add it off the heat
Splits after adding lemon or ginger juice	Acid	Keep citrus out of a milky chai

What happened	Likely cause	Next time
Thin, watery result	Too much liquid for the tea	More tea, or less oat drink

A split chai is still safe to drink; it just looks and feels wrong.

Getting the flavour right

- **Oat is sweet already.** Taste before you add sugar; you usually need less than with dairy.
- **Push the spice up, not the tea.** If the oat flavour dominates, add more cardamom and ginger rather than stewing the tea longer, which only makes it bitter.
- **Use a 3:2 ratio to start.** Three parts spiced tea to two parts oat drink, then adjust.
- **Froth it.** Barista oat foams well with a hand frother if you want a chai latte rather than a pan chai.

More on the base method in how to make chai at home, and on plant milks in oat milk in tea.

Common questions

Is oat chai vegan?
The drink is, if the tea, oat drink and sweetener are. Honey is not vegan; use sugar or maple syrup instead.

Can I use almond or soya instead?
Soya splits most readily in hot, acidic tea. Almond is thin but stable. Oat is the easiest to work with.

Does oat milk change the caffeine?
No. The caffeine comes from the black tea, whatever you add to it.

Can I make it ahead?
Make the spiced tea base ahead and keep it in the fridge for up to two days. Add fresh oat drink when you heat a portion.

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