Corn tea: Korea's sweet, toasty everyday brew

From the teas.co.uk wiki

Corn tea (**oksusu-cha** in Korean) is roasted corn kernels brewed in hot water. It is caffeine-free, naturally sweet, and tastes exactly as you would hope: toasted corn, a little like popcorn, with a rounded, comforting body. In Korea it is drunk hot in winter and cold from the fridge in summer, often instead of water.

It is one of the easiest infusions to like, and a good one for children and anyone avoiding caffeine.

Three things people confuse

Name	What is in it	Caffeine
Corn tea (oksusu-cha)	Roasted corn kernels	None
Corn silk tea (oksusu suyeom-cha)	The silky threads from the cob, often blended with roasted corn	None
"Popcorn tea"	Genmaicha: green tea with toasted **rice**	Yes

Corn silk is a different part of the plant with a milder, grassier taste, and it is usually sold blended rather than alone: many "corn silk" products contain mostly roasted corn, sometimes with other ingredients, so read the list.

How to brew it

- **Bags:** most Korean packs are made for a jug. One bag per 1 to 1.5 litres of boiling water, steeped 5 minutes, is typical: check the pack rather than using one per mug.
- **Loose roasted kernels:** 20g per litre, simmered for 5 minutes or steeped for 10.
- **Cold:** brew, cool, and keep covered in the fridge for up to two days. Chilled corn tea is excellent.
- **Blended:** corn and barley together is the classic Korean jug; corn softens barley's edge.

It does not get bitter, so timing is forgiving.

Buying it

- **Check whether it is kernels, silk, or a blend.**
- **Check the brewing volume** on the pack before comparing prices by bag count.
- **Buy a food product**, not seed corn or popcorn kernels intended for popping.

If you like this, the related grain infusions are barley tea (toastier, and not gluten-free) and sobacha, made from buckwheat.

Common questions

Does corn tea contain caffeine?

No, unless it is blended with tea leaves.

Is it gluten-free?

Corn is, but check the pack: corn and barley blends are common, and barley contains gluten.

Can I make it from sweetcorn?

Not really. It needs dried, roasted corn. You can toast dried corn kernels in a dry pan until golden, but a ready-roasted product is easier.

Is corn silk tea a health drink?

It is sold that way in some places. Treat it as a flavour choice; this page makes no health claim for it.

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