Osmanthus tea: the apricot-scented flower

From the teas.co.uk wiki

Osmanthus is a small golden flower with a big smell: apricot, peach and honey, unmistakable once you have met it. In China the flowers are called **gui hua**, they bloom in autumn, and they are used both as an infusion on their own and to scent tea: most famously oolong.

The plant is *Osmanthus fragrans*, sometimes sold as sweet olive or tea olive. It is not related to the tea plant. Kew: Osmanthus fragrans

Three things sold as "osmanthus tea"

What you buy	What is in it	Caffeine
Dried osmanthus flowers	Flowers only	None
Osmanthus oolong or green tea	Tea leaves scented or blended with the flowers	Yes
Osmanthus-flavoured tea	Tea with flavouring, sometimes with a few flowers added	Yes

Read the ingredients: if tea appears in the list, there is caffeine in the cup, however floral it smells.

How to brew it

Flowers alone: 1 teaspoon (about 2g) per 250ml, water at about 85°C, 3 to 4 minutes. The flowers float, so use an infuser basket or strain it. The cup is pale gold and delicately sweet.

Osmanthus oolong: brew as you would the oolong underneath it: 3g per 200ml at 90°C, 2 minutes for the first infusion, then more. See how to brew oolong tea.

Too perfumed? Use fewer flowers rather than a shorter brew: a weak infusion of a lot of flowers still tastes soapy.

What to do with it

- **With oolong.** The classic pairing. A lightly roasted oolong carries the apricot note beautifully.
- **With green tea.** Lighter and sweeter than jasmine, and less familiar.
- **As a dessert flavour.** Osmanthus is used in jellies, syrups and sweet soups in China; a spoonful of the infusion is lovely over poached pears.
- **Iced.** Brew double strength, cool, and serve over ice with a slice of peach.

Buying it

- **Buy flowers sold for drinking**, not craft or pot-pourri material.

- **Smell the pack if you can.** Osmanthus is all about aroma; old flowers go dusty and flat.
- **Check whether there is tea in it** if you want it caffeine-free.
- **Buy small.** Dried flowers fade; 25g goes a long way at a teaspoon per cup.

Our floral tea guide covers jasmine, rose and lavender, and oolong tea explains the style most often scented with osmanthus.

Common questions

Does osmanthus tea contain caffeine?
The flowers alone do not. Scented teas do, because of the tea base.

What does it taste like?
Apricot and honey, with a soft floral finish. It is sweeter-smelling than it is sweet-tasting.

Can I use flowers from an osmanthus bush in the garden?
Only if you know the plant is *Osmanthus fragrans* and has not been sprayed. Buying food-grade flowers is simpler.

Is it the same as jasmine tea?
No. Different flower, different aroma. Jasmine is white-floral and heady; osmanthus is fruity and gentler.

Earn rewards on teas.co.uk

Earn loyalty points on every order. Free to join.

+100 pts
Create your free account
Welcome bonus + earn on every order.

100 pts = 1 tree
Plant a tree in Scotland
Pledge points to our reforestation partner.

teas.co.uk · Tunbridge Wells, Kent · hello@teas.co.uk · 3-click cancel at teas.co.uk/cancel/