Can you take tea into New Zealand?

From the teas.co.uk wiki

Yes, but **you must declare it**. New Zealand treats tea as food, and the Traveller Declaration lists tea bags among the examples you have to tell them about. A sealed supermarket box still counts.

Declaring is not the same as losing it. Ordinary commercially packed tea is usually allowed straight through after the declaration; what officers are looking for is anything that could carry pests or unfamiliar plant material.

Rules checked: 17 September 2026. Always re-check before you fly.

What to declare, and how

Fill in the New Zealand Traveller Declaration, which you can submit online up to 24 hours before you start your journey. Tick the food question and list the tea. If you remember something after you have submitted, you can update it, or tell an officer when you arrive. Paper declarations are available if you need one. New Zealand Traveller Declaration

Keep the tea somewhere you can get at it, and be ready to show the packaging.

The conditions your tea needs to meet

The Ministry for Primary Industries sets conditions for processed plant foods: they must be identifiable, free from pests and contamination, and not able to grow. For unground tea, herbs, roots and spices, it must be commercially manufactured and packaged in its original, unopened packaging. MPI: bringing food to New Zealand

Other points worth knowing before you pack:

- **Quantity:** the stated limit is 2kg per product, or 1kg where the product contains meat or egg.
- **Honey, egg or meat ingredients:** bring additional conditions, including commercial unopened shelf-stable packaging and proportion limits.
- **Citrus** must be dried and meet one of the listed conditions, such as being powdered, contained in infusion bags, or below 5% of the product.
- **Seeds, mushrooms and unfamiliar botanicals** are the things to check individually with MPI.

The packing checklist

Check	What you want
Declaration	Food question ticked; tea listed
Packaging	Original manufacturer's pack, unopened

Check	What you want
Labelling	Full ingredients, readable
Type	Plain tea, or a herbal blend you have checked
Quantity	Within the stated limits, per product
Awkward ingredients	No honey, egg, meat, seeds or fungi unless checked

Four 50g boxes of the same tea is 200g: easily within the limits. Adding a different blend means checking that blend as well.

Choose teas that are easy to identify

Single-ingredient packs make the conversation short: Twinings Pure Green Tea is listed as 100% green tea, and Twinings Pure Peppermint as 100% peppermint. A sealed box with a clear ingredient list is far simpler at the border than a hand-filled caddy or an unlabelled market blend.

For the journey itself, see can you take teabags on a plane, and for packing ideas, the best tea to take travelling. Going on to Australia too? Read taking tea into Australia, where the rules differ.

Common questions

Do I really have to declare a box of teabags?
Yes. Tea bags are given as an example of food on the declaration. Declaring something allowed costs nothing; not declaring something restricted can mean an instant fine.

Will they take my tea away?
Ordinary commercially packed tea in its original packaging is usually fine. Items that do not meet the conditions may be treated or disposed of.

Can I bring loose leaf tea?
Yes, if it is commercially packaged, unopened and labelled. Decanted tea in a tin is much harder to clear.

What about tea I have already opened?
The conditions for unground tea, herbs and spices call for original unopened packaging, so an opened pack may not qualify. Take a sealed one.

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