How to Make Matcha Properly: Step by Step

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Matcha method, briefly:** Make matcha properly: sift to kill clumps, water off the boil at 70-80C never boiling, paste then whisk to a fine even foam.

Last reviewed by the teas.co.uk team in February 2026.

Properly made matcha needs ceremonial- or premium grade matcha powder, water at 70°C to 80°C (never boiling), a bamboo whisk (or a milk frother), a wide bowl, and roughly 90 seconds of practice. The powder does not dissolve; it is held in suspension by a vigorous "M" or "W" whisking motion until a fine layer of green foam forms on the surface. The cup should be vivid bright green, slightly sweet, slightly umami, and almost completely smooth on the palate. If your matcha tastes bitter, dusty, or grass clipping like, the issue is almost always grade, water temperature, or the powder being old; the technique itself is straightforward.

This guide covers the kit you need, the proper method, the most common mistakes, and the picks on our shelf for ceremonial grade matcha plus accessories.

The kit is cheaper than it looks. Around £8 to £15 gets you whisking, and roughly £15 of equipment plus £20 of decent matcha works out at about 30 bowls, against about £4 for a café matcha latte.

Making matcha at a glance

Step or factor	The answer
Kit that matters	A bamboo chasen and a wide bowl; a kitchen whisk will not do the job
Water	70°C to 80°C, never boiling
Method	Sift, paste, add the rest of the water, whisk in a W or M motion for 15 to 30 seconds, drink at once
Grade	Ceremonial for neat bowls; culinary for lattes and baking
Caffeine	Roughly 60 to 120mg for a usucha bowl, higher than steeped green tea because you drink the leaf
Storage	Airtight and cold; use within 6 to 8 weeks of opening

What you need (the basic kit)

Item	Why you need it	Workable substitute
Matcha powder, ceremonial or premium	The grade is the most important variable; cheap matcha can't be made well	None. Don't try to make ceremonial style matcha with culinary grade.
Wide ceramic bowl (matcha chawan)	Wide base lets the whisk move freely; deep enough to whisk without splashing	A wide cereal bowl works fine for a starter setup; aim for about 12 to 15cm across, because a narrow vessel leaves no room for the whisking motion
Bamboo whisk (chasen)	The 80 to 120 fine bamboo prongs aerate the powder into a smooth foam; designed for the job	An electric milk frother is an acceptable shortcut. A regular kitchen whisk is not: it cannot aerate the powder properly
Bamboo scoop (chashaku)	Doses the powder properly; one scoop = ~1g	Half a teaspoon is roughly equivalent
Sieve or strainer	Breaks up clumps in the powder so it dissolves smoothly	A fine tea strainer works
Kettle with temperature control	Boiling water makes matcha bitter	Without one, boil and check with a thermometer as it cools to about 80°C; cooling time varies with water volume and kettle

What the kit costs

- **Cheap chasen, £8 to £12.** Amazon or an Asian grocery. Adequate for daily home use.
- **Premium chasen, £25 to £50.** Hand made Japanese bamboo, for enthusiasts rather than beginners.
- **Bowl.** Any wide ceramic bowl works, including a cereal or soup bowl. Specialist matcha bowls are an aesthetic choice, not a functional one.
- **Sifter.** A tea strainer or a small fine mesh sieve.
- The rest of the kit, and what is worth spending on generally, is in the tea equipment guide.

Step by step: making a single bowl of matcha (usucha, "thin" tea)

1. **Warm the bowl.** Pour a small amount of hot water into the bowl, swirl, then discard. A cold bowl shocks the temperature down too far.
2. **Sieve the powder.** 1 to 2 grams (one scoop, or half a teaspoon) into the warmed bowl, through a sieve to break up clumps. This step is the difference between smooth matcha and lumpy matcha.
3. **Bring water to 70°C to 80°C.** Use a temperature controlled kettle, or boil and check with a thermometer as the water cools. Boiling water destroys the delicate amino acids that make matcha sweet.
4. **Pour 60 to 80ml of water** over the powder. About a third of a small bowl.

5. **Whisk vigorously in an "M" or "W" pattern:** for 15 to 20 seconds. Hold the whisk lightly between thumb and first two fingers, and move from the wrist, not the elbow. The goal is to break up the powder and aerate it into a fine green foam, not to stir in slow circles.
6. **Lift the whisk straight up** through the centre of the bowl as you finish, leaving the surface smooth with fine foam.
7. **Drink within 60 to 90 seconds** of whisking. Matcha settles fast; the experience is best when the foam is fresh.

It feels awkward the first two or three times. By the fifth attempt it is automatic.

The thick version (koicha)

1. **Use 3 to 4g of premium ceremonial matcha**, roughly double a usucha dose.
2. **Add 40 to 50ml of water**, less than you would use for usucha.
3. **Whisk gently and slowly** to a thick, syrupy consistency. Koicha is not aerated, so there is no fine foam to aim for.
4. **Drink it in two or three sips.**

Koicha only works with premium ceremonial grade, and at that dose it is a ceremony drink rather than a daily one; the caffeine figures below show why.

Common mistakes

- **Using boiling water.** The single most common matcha mistake. Boiling destroys the amino acid sweetness and over extracts the bitter catechins. Drop to 75°C.
- **Not sieving the powder.** Matcha clumps in storage. Whisking lumpy powder produces lumpy matcha, no matter how good the technique.
- **Over dosing the powder.** 1 to 2g per bowl is the proper dose. 4g produces an over strong cup that tastes harsh.
- **Using culinary grade matcha.** Culinary grade is for baking and lattes, not for whisked bowl drinking. The ceremonial grade vs culinary grade distinction matters.
- **Whisking too slowly or in circles.** The foam comes from rapid back and forth movement, not stirring.
- **Drinking old matcha.** Matcha oxidises rapidly once opened. Buy small bags, store in the fridge, and use within 6 to 8 weeks of opening.

The matcha latte version

For a matcha latte (less ceremony, more daily cup):

1. Sieve 1 to 2g matcha into a mug.
2. Add 60ml of 75°C water and whisk to a smooth paste with no lumps.
3. Heat 200ml of milk (oat, dairy, soya all work) to around 65°C, frothy if possible.

4. Pour the milk into the matcha paste, stirring as you pour.
5. Sweeten with honey or maple syrup if you like; many drinkers prefer it unsweetened.

The iced version

1. Sift 1 to 2g of matcha into a tall glass or a jug.
2. Add 30ml of warm water at 50°C to 60°C and whisk to a smooth paste.
3. Add 200ml of cold milk.
4. Add a teaspoon of honey if you want it sweet.
5. Pour over ice in a tall glass and stir to combine.

Storage

- **An unopened tin keeps for about 12 months** from manufacture, stored cool, dark and sealed.
- **Keep matcha in the fridge** in an airtight container; matcha oxidises rapidly at room temperature.
- **Bring to room temperature before opening** to avoid condensation forming inside the tin.
- **Buy small quantities, drink fresh.** A 30g tin is roughly 15 to 20 bowls at 1.5g to 2g each, so about three weeks of daily bowls. Don't buy a 200g tub unless you're a heavy daily drinker; freshness matters more than per gram price.

Caffeine per cup

- Usucha, 1 to 2g of matcha: roughly 60 to 120mg of caffeine.
- Koicha, 3 to 4g: roughly 180 to 320mg.
- Matcha latte, about 2g: roughly 120 to 160mg.
- Steeped green tea, for comparison: roughly 25 to 40mg a cup.

Matcha comes out higher because you drink the whole leaf rather than an infusion of it. The figures are approximate and vary with grade, dose and how long the tin has been open.

What we stock for the matcha protocol

Browse the matcha collection and the green teas collection for the full range.

For ceremonial grade matcha (for proper whisked bowls)

- Loyd Matcha Japanese Green Tea Powder, 40g, the matcha powder we currently stock; suits whisked bowls and lattesJapanese matcha; the standard daily option for proper bowls
- Teapigs Matcha Shots 15 Sachets, individual sachets; great for travel or testing the daily habit before committing to a tin
- Matcha stock rotates; the best matcha UK guide tracks the wider market

For matcha lattes (culinary grade is acceptable here)

- Teapigs Matcha On The Go 7 Sachets, blended with rice flour for an easy mixing latte

For accessories (whisks, scoops, bowls)

- Browse the teaware and tools collection for bamboo whisks and accessories

Clear caveats

- **Pregnancy:** matcha contains around 60 to 90mg caffeine per 1g serving (more than green tea per cup because you drink the leaf). Stay under the 200mg daily NHS pregnancy ceiling.
- **Iron absorption:** matcha tannins reduce iron absorption when consumed with iron rich meals. Drink between meals if you're managing anaemia.
- **Lead and heavy metals:** all green tea (matcha included) absorbs trace lead from soil. Reputable Japanese suppliers test below safety thresholds; very cheap unknown origin matcha is more variable. Stick to known suppliers.
- **The ceremonial route isn't required.** Daily matcha drunk casually with a milk frother is still excellent matcha. The ceremony is one approach, not the only valid one.
- **Bitterness is grade or technique.** If your matcha tastes bitter no matter what you do, the powder is the issue, not your skill.

Related reading: the matcha overview, the matcha vs green tea guide, the green tea overview, the ideal water temperatures guide, and the best matcha UK roundup.

Making a bowl, and how this differs from the whisk guide

This page is the complete protocol for making a bowl of matcha properly: the kit, sifting, the water temperature, the ratio and the finish. The single companion to read alongside it is how to whisk matcha, which goes deep specifically on the chasen technique, the W-stroke, posture, usucha versus koicha consistency and whisk care, so the two do not overlap. The method is unglamorous and reliable: sift one to two scoops of good matcha to kill clumps before water ever touches it, use water clearly off the boil (around seventy to eighty degrees, never boiling, which makes it bitter), add a little water first to make a smooth paste, then the rest, and whisk briskly until a fine even foam forms. Everything else, the latte version, the storage, is detail on that spine.

The biggest single quality lever is the matcha itself, not the technique: a fresh, vivid-green, properly stored ceremonial-grade powder forgives a clumsy whisk, while a dull, oxidised, cheap one cannot be rescued by any method. Store it airtight, cold and dark, and use it quickly once opened. No claim about the body is made for matcha here; its appeal is flavour and routine, and the measured, modest framing the wider matcha guide applies holds throughout. Buy a good ceremonial matcha and the kit in the wider tea range, or browse the full tea shop.

The mistakes that ruin a bowl, and the fixes

Almost every bad bowl of home matcha comes from one of four avoidable mistakes, and naming them is more useful than any amount of technique praise. The first is boiling water: water straight off the kettle

scalds the powder and pulls a harsh bitterness no whisking can remove, so off the boil, around seventy to eighty degrees, is not optional. The second is skipping the sift: matcha clumps readily, and a clumpy bowl is almost impossible to whisk smooth after the fact, whereas thirty seconds with a small sieve beforehand prevents it entirely. The third is treating it like instant powder, stirring in a circle rather than whisking briskly, which leaves it thin, flat and grainy instead of the fine even foam that makes matcha taste smooth. The fourth, and the most expensive, is poor or stale matcha: a dull, yellowish, badly stored powder cannot be rescued by any method, while a fresh, vivid-green one is forgiving even of an imperfect whisk. Fix those four and a good bowl is almost guaranteed; the detailed whisking craft itself is covered in the companion how to whisk matcha guide.

Common questions

Do I need a bamboo whisk? A chasen is the right tool and the cheap ones do the job very well, and an electric milk frother is a fine substitute. A regular kitchen whisk is the one thing that will not work.

Ceremonial or culinary grade at home? Ceremonial for neat whisked bowls, culinary for lattes and baking.

Which matcha should I buy in the UK? What we hold is listed above, and stock moves, so the best matcha UK guide is the place to check what is worth buying at the moment.

Curator's note: home matcha is dramatically better than café matcha. About £15 of equipment and £20 of decent matcha gives you around 30 properly made bowls. Once you have whisked your own, the syrupy concentrate café version permanently disappoints. Lee, teas.co.uk, Tunbridge Wells.

Source

- PubMed: Matcha green tea and human health

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · A single fresh tin of matcha beats a drawer of stale ones. Keep two or three favourites going, matcha included.

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