Dandelion Tea: Root, Leaf and Flower Guide

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Dandelion in brief:** Dandelion tea: roasted root as a caffeine free coffee alternative, or the leaf as a traditional diuretic infusion.

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

Dandelion tea (Taraxacum officinale) is brewed from the dried root, leaf, or flower of the common garden dandelion, with the root tea producing a coffee like bitter cup, the leaf tea producing a green diuretic tonic cup, and the flower tea producing a sweeter floral infusion. Dandelion has a long European herbal tradition as a spring tonic and a gentle diuretic. Its real strength on the modern shelf is the roasted root, which makes the closest caffeine-free stand-in for coffee you can brew.

This guide covers the three forms (root, leaf, flower), what each does, the brewing approach, and the picks on our shelf.

Root vs leaf vs flower: the three dandelion teas

Form	Character	Best for
Root (raw or roasted)	Bitter, earthy, slightly chocolatey when roasted; coffee like	Coffee substitute, digestive bitter
Leaf	Green, slightly grassy, mineral rich	A traditional diuretic infusion, mineral content
Flower	Sweet, floral, less assertive	A gentle, sweeter daily cup

Most British "dandelion tea" you'll find on the shelf is roasted dandelion root, often blended with chicory or burdock. The dedicated leaf and flower teas are less common but worth seeking out if you want a specific use case.

Roasted dandelion root, the coffee substitute

Roasted dandelion root has been used as a coffee substitute since at least the 19th century, with peak popularity during WW2 when British coffee was rationed. The roasting process develops chocolatey bitter notes that are surprisingly close to coffee in character, without any caffeine.

- **Flavour profile:** bitter, earthy, with a slight chocolate and roasted nut character when properly roasted.
- **The coffee cutting use case:** drinkers cutting caffeine often find roasted dandelion root the most successful substitute because of the cup character resemblance to coffee.
- **Pair with:** chicory root, burdock root, and roasted barley are common companions; together they form the British "ersatz coffee" blend.

The traditional digestive bitter

Dandelion root has a long folk reputation as a digestive bitter. The bitterness is the point: traditionally, herbalists held that a bitter cup before a meal wakes up the appetite and helps the stomach settle into richer food. The effect, such as it is, is gentle and builds over weeks rather than days.

- **A daily habit, not a quick fix:** a single cup does little; some drinkers keep a daily cup going as part of a routine.
- **Drink before meals:** the bitter character is most enjoyed 15 to 30 minutes before a richer meal.

The diuretic / mineral use case (leaf form)

Dandelion leaf has been used in European folk medicine for fluid retention, with the French nickname "pissenlit" ("piss the bed") earning the obvious reputation. It has a gentle, long-standing reputation as a mild diuretic.

What makes dandelion leaf interesting compared to most diuretics: the leaf is high in potassium, which usually compensates for the potassium loss that diuretic action causes. Most diuretic medications cause potassium depletion as a side effect; dandelion's high potassium content means the net potassium balance stays neutral or even positive.

How to brew dandelion tea

- **Roasted root:** 100°C, 7 to 10 minutes. The roots are slow extractors. Brew strong; under brewed dandelion root is thin and disappointing.
- **Raw root (less common):** 100°C, 7 to 10 minutes; more bitter than roasted.
- **Leaf:** 100°C, 5 to 7 minutes.
- **Flower:** 100°C, 4 to 5 minutes.
- **Sweeten if needed:** the bitter character of the root is part of its traditional appeal, but a teaspoon of honey makes it more drinkable. Cutting bitterness completely with a lot of sugar undermines the bile stimulant effect.

The dandelion + burdock pairing

The traditional British "dandelion and burdock" cordial is a long standing soft drink made from the two roots. The herbal tea blend version (without sugar) is one of the more characterful British root cups, with both roots giving a pleasant bitter, earthy, digestive character.

Modern bottled "dandelion and burdock" is usually flavoured with anise and sweetened with sugar; the herbal tea version is closer to the original.

What we stock

Browse the herbal teas collection and the wellness teas for the full dandelion range.

For dandelion and burdock blends

- Yogi Detox 17 Bags, dandelion + burdock + ginger; the classic British dandelion and burdock pairing
- Dragonfly's dandelion, burdock and nettle blend (20 bags); the herbalist's three root and leaf mix
- Pukka's fennel, cardamom and nettle blend (20 bags, with dandelion supporting); a gentle daily cup

For roasted root coffee substitute use

- Yogi Roasted Dandelion Spice 17 Bags, roasted dandelion root with cinnamon, cardamom, ginger; the chai spiced coffee substitute cup

For dandelion as part of women's health blends

- Pukka's 20 bag blend of hibiscus + nettle + fennel + dandelion; an easy daily cup

Clear caveats

- **Gallstones:** dandelion stimulates bile flow, which is generally beneficial. If you have known gallstones, the increased bile flow can theoretically trigger pain. Discuss with your GP if you have a gallstone history.
- **Diuretic medication interactions:** dandelion is a mild diuretic. Combined with prescription diuretics (furosemide, bendroflumethiazide), the cumulative effect can be greater than expected. Mention to your GP.
- **Allergy:** people with ragweed, daisy, or marigold allergies sometimes react to dandelion (same plant family). Stop if you notice skin rash, itching, or respiratory symptoms.
- **Pregnancy:** high dose dandelion isn't recommended in pregnancy, and the NHS advises no more than four cups of herbal tea a day; ask your midwife.
- **Lithium and dandelion:** the diuretic effect can theoretically alter lithium clearance. People on lithium for bipolar disorder should mention dandelion tea use to their psychiatrist.
- **The usual myth about flushing out toxins still applies.** Dandelion has a gentle traditional role around bile; it does not purge toxins the way marketing suggests. The liver doesn't need flushing, and tea won't undo the effects of how you live, eat and drink.

Related reading: the nettle tea overview, the herbal and fruit infusions overview, and the decaf vs caffeine free guide.

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