Chamomile Tea

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Chamomile, in summary:** The full chamomile tea guide: the two varieties, the real sleep and anxiety evidence, how to brew it properly, blends and the best products.

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

Chamomile is the universal British evening tea, the gentle floral infusion that's been the standard caffeine free bedtime drink for centuries. Made from the dried flowers of the chamomile plant (typically German chamomile, *Matricaria chamomilla*, occasionally Roman chamomile, *Chamaemelum nobile*), chamomile tea produces a pale gold cup with delicate apple like sweetness and a gentle, restful character. It's a long-loved evening herbal, and it's been a staple of European herbal medicine for over 2,000 years.

This guide covers everything about chamomile tea: the two main chamomile varieties, the actual evidence base for sleep and anxiety effects, the proper brewing approach, the major commercial chamomile products, and how to use chamomile effectively in a daily routine.

The two main chamomile varieties

Two distinct plants are sold as "chamomile" in herbal tea retail; both are used but produce slightly different cups:

German chamomile (*Matricaria chamomilla*), the dominant commercial variety. Annual plant native to Europe and Western Asia. Flowers are small daisy like white and yellow blooms; the dried flowers produce a sweet, apple like, slightly fruity cup. This is what most British supermarket chamomile tea uses (Twinings, Clipper, Pukka, Heath & Heather all use German chamomile). It is the variety used in almost all commercial chamomile tea.

Roman chamomile (*Chamaemelum nobile*), the perennial alternative. Native to Western Europe; produces slightly larger flowers with a more bitter, complex cup. Less commonly used in commercial tea but appears in some specialty herbal blends. Roman chamomile has slightly different active compound profiles and traditionally appears more in essential oil applications than tea.

For commercial British tea, the choice between varieties is largely irrelevant; you'll be drinking German chamomile from any major brand. The variety distinction matters mostly for specialty herbal applications and academic discussions.

The chamomile flavour profile

Chamomile tea has a characteristic flavour that's easy to recognise once you know it:

- **Apple like sweetness:** the most distinctive note; Spanish language name "manzanilla" means "little apple"
- **Floral character:** gentle and not overpowering
- **Slight bitterness** on the finish, particularly with longer brewing
- **Pale gold cup colour:** lighter than true tea
- **Mild aroma:** restrained rather than dominant

The flavour is gentle enough to drink as a daily evening cup without becoming tiresome. Some drinkers find the floral character slightly bland; for those drinkers, chamomile blends (chamomile + lemon balm, chamomile + lavender, chamomile + valerian) provide more flavour complexity while preserving the underlying chamomile sleep effects.

Chamomile and sleep

Chamomile has a long, well-earned reputation as a wind-down drink, though the effect is gentle rather than dramatic.

- **It is mild and comforting:** a warm, caffeine-free cup that suits the hour before bed
- **The ritual matters:** making and slowly drinking a warm cup is part of why a bedtime routine helps
- **Regular use suits it best** as a steady evening habit rather than a one-off fix
- **It is not a treatment:** for persistent or severe sleep problems

The realistic expectation is gentle help with winding down, working alongside good sleep habits rather than replacing them. For ongoing insomnia or a chronic sleep disorder, chamomile tea is not the answer; speak to a GP. See the tea for sleep guide.

Chamomile and relaxation

Chamomile is also a traditional choice for a quiet, settled moment in the day. A warm, caffeine free cup can be a small, gentle routine when you want to slow down.

The effect is gentle, and chamomile tea is not a treatment for a diagnosed anxiety condition. If anxiety is persistent or affecting daily life, support from a GP is the right step.

Other traditional uses

Chamomile has a number of other gentle, traditional associations:

- **After-meal comfort:** a long-standing traditional cup for settling the stomach
- **A warm drink for winding down:** often reached for at the end of a busy day
- **Skin and bath use:** traditionally used in compresses and bath preparations, not only as a drink
- **A comforting cup when run-down:** warming and comforting, though it will not treat a cold

The realistic framing: chamomile is a gentle, comforting daily drink with a rich tradition behind it, not a powerful medicine.

How to brew chamomile properly

Chamomile needs proper brewing to develop its full character and effects:

1. **Use freshly drawn cold water** brought to a rolling boil. Boiling water is appropriate for chamomile.
2. **Measure 1 to 2 teaspoons of dried flowers** (for loose leaf), or 1 tea bag for each 200ml cup. Loose leaf chamomile is generous because the flowers are fluffy and take significant volume.
3. **Steep for 7 to 10 minutes:** longer than true tea; the longer brewing extracts the active compounds and develops the apple like character. Some drinkers prefer 12+ minutes for stronger effects.
4. **Cover the cup or pot during brewing** to prevent the volatile aroma compounds from escaping with the steam
5. **Strain or remove the bag**
6. **Add honey if desired:** complementary to the apple like sweetness; lemon also works for a brighter cup
7. **Drink hot** 30 to 60 minutes before bedtime for sleep support; the relaxation effect builds up gradually

The most common brewing mistake is undersepping. Chamomile brewed for 3 minutes (the typical black tea brewing time) produces a thin, weak cup; 7 to 10 minutes is closer to proper extraction. Water temperatures for every tea family are set out in the water temperatures guide and the loose leaf brewing guide.

Chamomile blends

Many commercial chamomile products are blends rather than pure chamomile. The major blend types:

Sleep blends with chamomile as the base:

- Chamomile + lavender (Pukka Three Chamomile, similar)
- Chamomile + lemon balm (Pukka Night Time and similar sleep blends)
- Chamomile + valerian (stronger sedative effect, sometimes called "Sleep" or "Bedtime")
- Chamomile + lemon balm + lavender + valerian (evening blends with several herbs)

Relaxation blends:

- Chamomile + lemon balm (gentle daytime ease)
- Chamomile + passionflower (anxiety reduction)
- Chamomile + rose petals (floral evening blend)

Digestive blends:

- Chamomile + peppermint (a gentle after meal pairing)
- Chamomile + fennel (another after meal blend)
- Chamomile + ginger (warming and settling)

For drinkers who specifically want pure chamomile flavour, single ingredient products like Twinings Pure Camomile or Clipper Organic Camomile are the way to go. For drinkers wanting more complex flavour or stronger functional effects, the blends provide additional ingredients without losing the chamomile foundation.

Pure chamomile vs blended sleep teas

One specific consideration for drinkers using chamomile for sleep: pure chamomile vs blended sleep teas. The trade off:

- **Pure chamomile:** gentlest effect, most flexible use, lowest risk of unwanted effects from other ingredients
- **Chamomile + lavender + lemon balm:** slightly stronger combined sleep effects, more complex flavour, slightly higher cost
- **Chamomile + valerian:** noticeably stronger sedative effects, but valerian's musty smell and taste polarises drinkers
- **Comprehensive sleep blends:** strongest sleep effects, complex flavour, highest cost; risk of accumulating ingredient sensitivities

For new chamomile drinkers, pure chamomile is the natural starting point; if the effect is insufficient, progressing to gentle blends (chamomile + lemon balm) is usually the next step. Stronger sleep blends with valerian are appropriate for drinkers who specifically need more pronounced sedative effects.

Pregnancy and chamomile

While expecting, steer clear of liquorice root teas and limit herbal tea to four cups across the day, the NHS says; caffeine free does not settle whether a blend is suitable, so check with a midwife or pharmacist. Some sources flag chamomile as potentially affecting uterine activity at very high doses, but typical cup amounts are not a concern for healthy pregnancies.

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The chamomile sustainability picture

Most commercial chamomile is grown in Eastern Europe (Egypt, Bulgaria, Hungary, Croatia) and Northern Africa, with significant production also in South America. The herb is relatively easy to cultivate organically, and many premium chamomile products carry organic certification.

For drinkers prioritising organic in their chamomile, look for Soil Association Organic or USDA Organic certification on the packaging. Organic certification runs across the chamomile ranges of Pukka, Clipper, Heath & Heather and Dragonfly alike.

What we stock

Browse the chamomile tea range and the wider herbal tea range. The most bought chamomile products on teas.co.uk:

- Teapigs Chamomile Flowers, 50 Tea Bags 75g
- Teapigs Chamomile Lullaby Bedtime, 15 Tea Bags 33g
- Clipper Organic Chamomile, Lemon & Lavender Sleep Time 20, 30g
- Good Earth Chamomile and Grapefruit, 15 Tea Bags 42g
- Loyd Pure Camomile, 40 Tea Bags 56g
- Pukka Organic Chamomile, Vanilla and Manuka Honey, 20 Tea Bags 32g

For comparisons across the wider herbal tea landscape, see also: Twinings, Pukka, Clipper, Yogi, Heath & Heather.

The verdict on chamomile

Chamomile is the gentle, reliable, evidence supported evening herbal tea that should be in every British household's tea cupboard. The combination of pleasant flavour, mild but real sleep supporting effects, broad availability, and low cost makes it one of the most useful herbal teas for everyday use.

For new herbal tea drinkers, chamomile is the natural starting point. Almost everyone finds the flavour agreeable, the effects are gentle enough that it won't overwhelm new drinkers, and it is the foundation for understanding how herbal infusions differ from true tea. From chamomile, exploring blends and other herbals becomes natural.

Don't expect dramatic effects from chamomile. The realistic framing is "gentle support for sleep and relaxation as part of a broader routine", not "instant solution to sleep problems". Used regularly as part of a sensible bedtime routine, chamomile fits in comfortably; used occasionally as a one off fix for sleepless nights, it's likely to disappoint.

For the wider context see the herbal tea overview, the best tea for sleep guide, the peppermint tea overview, the ginger tea overview, the decaf vs caffeine free comparison, the inside Twinings, and the Pukka deep dive.

The two chamomile varieties, at a glance

Variety	Plant	Cup	Use
German chamomile	Matricaria chamomilla (annual)	sweet, apple like, slightly fruity	the dominant commercial tea variety; strongest sleep research
Roman chamomile	Chamaemelum nobile (perennial)	larger flower, more bitter and complex	specialty blends; more often essential oil use

Easy picks alongside this one: English Breakfast, Earl Grey, green tea, loose leaf tea, Darjeeling, oolong, and herbal tea. Have a wander through the tea range; above £35 we cover UK delivery.

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teas · Whole flower chamomile in a clean pot outdoes five bags made in a rush.

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