# Jasmine Tea

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Jasmine tea, in summary:** Real jasmine tea is scented with fresh jasmine over repeated cycles, far better than synthetic versions, with the full picture on process, grades and brewing.

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

**Jasmine tea is the romantic heart of Chinese tea, the green or white tea scented with fresh jasmine flowers through a labour intensive traditional process that produces one of the most distinctive cups in the tea world.** Real jasmine tea isn't simply tea with dried jasmine flowers added; it's tea that's absorbed jasmine aroma through repeated overnight scenting with fresh jasmine blossoms during the brief summer flowering season. The result is a tea that smells perfumed before brewing and produces a cup with complex floral character layered over the underlying green tea base.

This guide covers everything about jasmine tea: the traditional scenting process, the difference between authentic and synthetic jasmine teas, the famous jasmine pearl style, the proper brewing approach, the major commercial products, and how jasmine tea fits into the wider Chinese tea tradition.

## The traditional jasmine scenting process

Authentic Chinese jasmine tea is produced through a traditional process that dates back over 1,000 years:

1. **Base tea production:** typically a quality Chinese green tea (often Mao Feng or similar) is produced through standard pan firing in spring and stored until the jasmine season
2. **Jasmine flower harvest:** fresh jasmine flowers (typically *Jasminum sambac*) are picked just before they open, in mid summer (usually July to September); the flowers must be unopened to release maximum aroma during the scenting
3. **Layering:** the tea leaves and unopened jasmine flowers are layered in alternating beds in scenting rooms; the flowers open overnight, releasing their fragrance which is absorbed by the tea leaves
4. **Scenting cycles:** the spent flowers are removed and replaced with fresh blooms; quality jasmine tea undergoes 4 to 7 scenting cycles, each adding more fragrance to the leaves
5. **Final drying:** after scenting is complete, the tea is gently dried again to remove any moisture absorbed from the flowers
6. **Sorting and packaging:** the scented tea is sorted, with most flowers removed (some commercial products leave a few flowers in for visual appeal, but premium jasmine tea typically has all flowers

removed)

The process is labour intensive and requires fresh jasmine flowers in significant quantities; the ratio of flowers to tea can be 4:1 or higher for premium jasmine tea (4kg of flowers used to scent 1kg of tea). This is why authentic jasmine tea costs significantly more than basic flavoured tea alternatives that simply mix dried jasmine flowers with tea or use synthetic jasmine flavouring.

For the wider green tea family see the green tea overview.

## Authentic vs synthetic jasmine tea

One important practical distinction: not all "jasmine tea" is produced the same way. Three main approaches:

**Traditional jasmine scented tea** , the authentic process described above. Tea leaves absorb actual jasmine flower aroma through repeated scenting cycles. Flowers may or may not be present in the final product. This is what premium Chinese jasmine tea is.

**Tea blended with dried jasmine flowers** , lower quality approach where dried jasmine flowers are simply mixed into tea leaves without proper scenting. The dried flowers provide some aroma but much less than properly scented tea; the tea leaves themselves haven't absorbed the jasmine character. Typically lower priced; visually identifiable by significant flower presence in the bag or loose leaf.

**Tea flavoured with synthetic jasmine** , the cheapest approach, common in mass market products. Tea is sprayed with synthetic jasmine flavouring; produces strong jasmine aroma but typically lacks the complexity and subtlety of authentic scented tea. May be labelled "natural" if the flavouring is derived from jasmine extracts, but the production approach is fundamentally different from traditional scenting.

For drinkers wanting authentic jasmine tea experience, look for products specifically labelled as "scented" rather than "flavoured", from brands with credible Chinese tea sourcing relationships. The price premium for authentic jasmine tea is real but so is the quality difference; cheap supermarket jasmine tea often falls into the synthetic flavouring category.

## Jasmine pearls (Long Zhu / Dragon Pearls)

One of the most distinctive jasmine tea formats: jasmine pearls. The production process:

1. **Tea leaves are hand rolled** into small pearl shaped balls during processing; this is done while the leaves are still pliable
2. **The pearls are then jasmine scented** using the traditional process described above
3. **The completed pearls** are dried and packaged

Jasmine pearls have several distinctive characteristics:

- **Visual appeal:** the small green pearls are visually distinctive in the cupboard and during brewing
- **Slow unfurling during brewing:** the pearls slowly unfurl in hot water, releasing flavour gradually; visually appealing when brewed in a clear teapot or glass
- **Multiple infusions:** the rolled pearls give 3 to 4 excellent infusions as they slowly unfurl
- **Concentrated flavour:** the rolling process concentrates the leaf and produces stronger cup character

Jasmine pearls (sold as Teapigs Jasmine Pearls in mainstream British retail) are one of the more accessible introductions to authentic jasmine tea. The hand rolling adds cost but the cup is noticeably different from flat leaf jasmine tea.

## The jasmine tea flavour profile

Authentic jasmine tea has a distinctive flavour profile:

- **Strong floral aroma:** the jasmine character dominates the aroma both before brewing (you can smell the jasmine on the dry leaves) and during/after brewing
- **Balanced base tea character:** the underlying green or white tea provides the structural foundation; the jasmine is layered on top rather than masking the tea entirely
- **Sweet floral finish:** the cup leaves a pleasant lingering jasmine character
- **Pale gold cup colour:** similar to other green teas
- **Smooth mouthfeel:** the proper scenting process produces refined cups without harshness
- **Aromatic and uplifting:** the floral aroma has perceived stress easing and mood lifting effects

The balance between jasmine and base tea matters; over scented jasmine tea can taste perfumed and synthetic, while under scented versions can taste like ordinary green tea with weak jasmine notes. Premium authentic jasmine tea achieves the right balance between distinctive jasmine character and underlying tea quality.

## Base teas for jasmine scenting

Different base teas can be used for jasmine scenting:

**Green tea base** , the most common approach. Pan fired Chinese green teas (Mao Feng, Yin Zhen, various Fujian green teas) are most frequently used. The unoxidised character provides a clean canvas for the jasmine.

**White tea base** , more expensive but produces particularly delicate jasmine teas. White tea's natural sweetness complements the jasmine character; the result is one of the more refined cups in the jasmine tea world.

**Black tea base** , less traditional but does exist; produces a sturdier cup where the malty black tea character competes with the jasmine. Some premium Chinese black teas are jasmine scented.

For drinkers exploring jasmine tea, the green tea base versions are the most traditional and most widely available. White tea base jasmine is a worthwhile premium experience for drinkers who specifically want the most delicate version.

## How to brew jasmine tea properly

Jasmine tea benefits from green tea style brewing:

1. **Use freshly drawn cold water** brought to a boil and then cooled to 75 to 85°C (slightly warmer than Japanese sencha; use a thermometer to check, or a kettle with a temperature setting)

2. **Use 1 teaspoon of loose leaf jasmine tea** (about 2g), or 1 tea bag if your cup holds 200ml. For jasmine pearls, use 6 to 8 pearls per cup
3. **Steep for 2 to 3 minutes:** sufficient to extract the jasmine character without producing bitterness
4. **Strain or remove leaves promptly:** for the first infusion
5. **Drink neat:** no milk, no sweetener; jasmine tea's character is the point
6. **Re brew:** jasmine pearls in particular give 3 to 4 excellent infusions

The cooled water requirement is essential; boiling water on jasmine green tea produces bitterness that masks the floral character. Jasmine and other green teas each have their own temperature in the water temperatures guide.

## Iced jasmine tea

Jasmine tea is excellent iced, particularly in summer. Two approaches:

**Hot brewed iced jasmine**:

1. Brew jasmine tea hot at slightly stronger strength (1.5 tea bags per 200ml of cooled water)
2. Cool to room temperature
3. Pour over ice
4. Add a sprig of fresh mint or slice of lemon if desired

**Cold brewed jasmine**:

1. Add 4 jasmine tea bags or 4 tablespoons of loose leaf to 1 litre of cold water
2. Refrigerate for 4 to 6 hours
3. Strain and serve over ice

Cold brewed jasmine produces a particularly smooth, less astringent cup that highlights the floral character. One of the more pleasant summer iced teas.

## Jasmine tea caffeine

Jasmine tea contains caffeine because the base tea is caffeinated:

- **Green base jasmine** 20 to 35mg caffeine per cup (similar to standard green tea)
- **White base jasmine** 15 to 30mg caffeine per cup (similar to standard white tea)
- **Black base jasmine** 40 to 60mg caffeine per cup (similar to standard black tea)

For caffeine sensitive drinkers, the green base or white base jasmine teas are appropriate for afternoon drinking; black base would be reserved for morning. For more on caffeine see the ultimate caffeine guide.

## The jasmine tea cultural context

Jasmine tea has cultural significance beyond just being a flavour variety:

- **Chinese hospitality:** jasmine tea is one of the most common Chinese hospitality drinks; offering jasmine tea to guests is a traditional gesture
- **Northern Chinese restaurants:** jasmine tea is the most common tea served in northern Chinese cuisine, particularly in Beijing style restaurants
- **Symbolism:** jasmine flowers represent purity, simplicity, and modesty in Chinese culture; jasmine tea carries these associations
- **Wedding traditions:** jasmine tea is sometimes part of traditional Chinese wedding ceremonies
- **Wider Asian usage:** jasmine tea is also popular in Vietnam, Thailand, and other Asian countries beyond China

For British drinkers exploring jasmine tea, understanding the cultural context adds depth to the experience; the tea isn't just a flavoured product but a piece of cultural heritage with thousands of years of associated meaning.

### What we stock

Browse the green tea range for jasmine and other Chinese green teas. The most bought jasmine products on teas.co.uk:

- Twinings Jasmine Green Tea, 20 Tea Bags 40g
- Twinings Jasmine Green Tea, 80 Tea Bags

For comparisons across the wider green tea landscape, see also: Teapigs, Twinings, Clipper, Pukka.

### The verdict on jasmine

Jasmine tea is the romantic heart of the Chinese tea tradition and one of the most distinctive cups in the broader tea world. The combination of authentic flower scenting tradition, beautiful visual character (especially in pearl form), and complex floral and tea balance makes it one of the more rewarding green tea experiences for drinkers wanting something beyond standard everyday green.

For drinkers building a tea collection that goes beyond British staples, jasmine tea is a natural addition. The proper brewing approach (cooled water, short steep, no sweetener) is essential; brewed correctly, jasmine tea is one of the most aromatic and emotionally evocative cups available.

Be aware of the authentic vs synthetic distinction; supermarket "jasmine tea" is often the synthetic flavoured version that produces strong aroma but lacks the complexity of properly scented tea. Spending on authentic jasmine tea (such as Teapigs Jasmine Pearls or specialist Chinese imports) gives a clearly better cup than the cheaper alternatives.

The visual side of brewing jasmine pearls in a clear glass or teapot is part of the appeal; for drinkers who enjoy theatre and looks alongside flavour, jasmine pearls offer one of the more complete cups available in mainstream retail.

Don't overlook jasmine tea just because it's familiar from Chinese restaurants; the proper authentic version is a different drink from the standard restaurant version. Quality jasmine tea is one of the more rewarding small upgrades available to drinkers expanding their tea collection beyond British essentials.

*For the wider context see the green tea overview, the sencha overview, the dragonwell overview, the white tea overview, the matcha overview, the water temperatures guide, the loose leaf brewing guide, the caffeine across teas, and the Teapigs deep dive.*

### Quick reference: authentic vs synthetic jasmine

| Type | How it is made | Quality |
|---|---|---|
| Traditional scented | Layered with fresh jasmine, 4-9 cycles | The real thing, complex and integrated |
| Blended with dried flowers | Dried jasmine mixed in, no true scenting | Lower, weaker aroma |
| Synthetic flavoured | Sprayed jasmine flavouring | Cheapest, strong but flat, avoid |
| plain test | The cooled cup, not the price | Stays pleasant if real |

### Source

- EFSA Scientific Opinion on the Safety of Caffeine (2015)

Worth keeping on the shelf around this article: English Breakfast, Earl Grey, green tea, loose leaf tea, Darjeeling, oolong, and herbal tea. The rest of the tea shop is kept here, and above £35 UK shipping is free.

**FROM THE CURATOR**

*teas* · Jasmine is best priced per cup, never per pack. Loose jasmine usually wins, and a good supermarket bag occasionally keeps up.

### More from the tea wiki

- Green tea
- Black tea
- Oolong tea
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- Herbal tea
- Caffeine in tea
- How to make tea properly
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