Chai Without the Caffeine

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Caffeine-free chai, in summary:** Most chai is caffeinated black tea. The caffeine free routes, rooibos, spice only, decaf, homemade, that keep the warming flavour with no caffeine.

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

Caffeine free chai is a real category. Most "chai" you can buy is built on a black tea base (caffeinated). The caffeine free versions swap the base for rooibos or for spices alone, same warming flavour profile, no caffeine. Useful for evening drinking and caffeine sensitive drinkers who don't want to give up their chai routine.

Two ways to make caffeine free chai

1. Rooibos based chai. Rooibos replaces the black tea base. The spices (cardamom, cinnamon, ginger, cloves, black pepper) carry the chai flavour; rooibos's sweet woody character supports them comfortably. The cup tastes recognisably of chai with a slightly mellower base. Pukka and Yogi both make rooibos chai variants.

2. Spice only chai. No tea base at all, just the spices. The cup is sharper, more aromatic, less rounded. Drink Me Chai do a "Spiced Chai Latte" sachet that's primarily milk powder + spices with no tea. Closer to a spiced milk drink than a tea.

Caffeine free chai brands worth buying

- **Pukka After Dinner / Pukka Three Mint chai variants.** Cardamom + fennel + ginger + liquorice. Caffeine free, with an herbal slant. £0.30 per cup.
- **Yogi Egyptian Liquorice Chai.** Caffeine free chai variant from Yogi's range.
- **Pukka Turmeric Active.** Caffeine free spiced infusion with turmeric base.
- **Twinings Spiced Apple & Cinnamon.** Cinnamon forward, caffeine free, similar warming profile.
- **Drink Me Chai Spiced Chai Latte sachets.** Caffeine free spice + milk powder; just add hot water.

Making caffeine free chai at home

Better than most pre made bags. Heat 200ml milk + 200ml water in a small pan. Add 4 cardamom pods (crushed), 1 small piece cinnamon stick, 4 cloves, a thin slice of fresh ginger, a pinch of black pepper. Simmer 5 minutes. Strain into a mug, sweeten to taste with honey or sugar. Real chai flavour, completely caffeine free.

Want a tea base for body? Swap the half water for rooibos brewed strong (3 bags in 200ml hot water). Decaf Assam works too (decaf is very low in caffeine, not zero) if you want the malty character without the caffeine.

Why traditional chai contains caffeine

Authentic Indian masala chai is built on strong CTC Assam tea, the malty body holds up to milk and spices. The black tea base is what makes it "chai" rather than "spiced milk." Removing the tea changes the cup; rooibos base or spice only versions are legitimately good but distinct from the traditional version.

The caffeine free routes, compared

There are four routes to a caffeine free chai, each a slightly different drink:

Route	What it is	Cup character
Rooibos based chai	rooibos replaces the black tea base, spices carry the flavour	recognisably chai, mellower, naturally sweet
Spice only chai	no tea base, just the spices	sharper, more aromatic, a spiced milk drink
Decaf black chai	decaffeinated Assam base, 2-5mg residual	closest to traditional, malty body kept
Homemade from whole spices	cardamom, cinnamon, clove, ginger, pepper simmered in milk and water	the truest flavour, completely caffeine free

How to choose: decaf black is closest to the traditional cup, rooibos is the easy zero caffeine everyday pick, and spice only or homemade is the brightest and truest. Pre made rooibos chai from Pukka is the convenient version; the full numbers are in the caffeine in tea guide, with caffeine free blends across the full tea shop.

FAQ

Is chai tea caffeine free? Most chai is NOT caffeine free, the traditional version uses black tea as the base (~30-50mg per cup). Caffeine free versions exist using rooibos or spice only bases.

What is caffeine free chai called? Often "rooibos chai" or "decaf chai" depending on the base. Pukka, Yogi, and Drink Me Chai all make caffeine free chai variants.

Best caffeine free chai brand UK? Pukka (organic, herbal led) or Yogi (American but well distributed). For sachet convenience, Drink Me Chai's spiced sachets.

Curator's note: Pukka After Dinner with a teaspoon of honey is the curator's evening chai when caffeine isn't the answer. Spice forward, warming, no sleep cost. Lee, teas.co.uk.

On the shopping side, see the English tea range and loose leaf range.

References cited

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

FROM THE CURATOR

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Companion chai reading

- Caffeine in tea
- Chai tea
- Rooibos
- Assam tea

More from the tea wiki

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