Chai Latte Recipe

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Home chai latte, in summary:** The milk led cafe version: a strong spiced black or concentrate base, lengthened with steamed frothed milk, sweeter and creamier by design.

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

The home chai latte recipe takes 10 minutes, costs about 50p per cup, and dramatically beats café chai lattes, particularly the syrupy concentrate based versions. Whole spices, fresh milk, real black tea brewed properly. This is the working recipe, with variations.

The base recipe (makes 2 cups)

Ingredients

- 200ml water
- 300ml whole milk (or oat milk)
- 4 green cardamom pods, lightly crushed
- 1 small piece cinnamon stick
- 4 cloves
- 1 thin slice fresh ginger (5mm)
- Pinch of cracked black pepper
- 2 tsp CTC Assam tea (or 2 strong black tea bags)
- 2-3 tsp sugar or honey
- Optional: ½ tsp vanilla extract

Method

1. **Spice infusion (3 minutes).** Water + cardamom + cinnamon + cloves + ginger + pepper into small saucepan. Bring to gentle simmer. Hold 3 minutes, water turns amber.
2. **Tea steep (4 minutes).** Add tea. Reduce heat. Simmer 4 minutes.
3. **Milk and sweetener (3 minutes).** Add milk and sugar. Heat to just below boiling. Stir constantly.
4. **Strain and serve.** Pour through fine sieve into mugs. Top with cinnamon dust if desired.

Total: 10 minutes. Makes 2 generous cups.

Variations

Iced chai latte

Brew strong concentrate (200ml water, full spices, 2 bags, 7-minute steep). Strain, sweeten while hot. Cool 1 hour. Pour 100ml of cooled concentrate over ice; top with 150ml cold milk.

Dirty chai latte

Make standard recipe. Add 1 espresso shot per cup. Caffeine load: 110-130mg per cup. Don't drink after 2pm. More on dirty chai.

Vanilla chai latte

Add ½ tsp vanilla extract or scrape ¼ vanilla pod into the milk before heating.

Salted caramel chai latte

Stir 1 tsp caramel sauce + pinch of flaky sea salt into the cup before adding the strained chai.

Chocolate chai latte

Add 1 tsp cocoa powder + 1 tsp sugar to the milk before heating. Whisk to combine.

Pumpkin spice chai latte

Stir 1 tbsp pumpkin purée + ½ tsp pumpkin pie spice into the milk.

Caffeine free chai latte

Replace black tea with 2 rooibos tea bags. More caffeine free options.

Decaf chai latte

Use decaf tea bags. 2-5mg residual caffeine.

Plant based milk choices

- **Oat milk.** Best texture, slight sweetness. Most café like result.
- **Almond milk.** Lighter, slightly nutty. Less creamy.
- **Soy milk.** Closest to dairy in protein. Can curdle if overheated.
- **Coconut milk.** Strong coconut flavour competes with spices. Specialist preference.
- **Avoid:** rice milk (too thin), pea milk (too savoury).

Equipment

You don't need a steam wand:

- Small saucepan

- Wooden spoon
- Fine mesh strainer
- Optional: handheld milk frother (£8-12) for extra frothy milk

Pre made spice mix

For weekday speed, pre blend a dry spice mix:

- 4 tbsp ground cardamom
- 2 tbsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tbsp ground ginger
- 1 tbsp ground cloves
- 1 tsp ground black pepper

Use ¼ tsp per cup. Less optimal than fresh whole spices, faster than measuring out pods. Replace every 3 months.

Common mistakes

- **Skipping the spice infusion step.** Adding spices to the tea simultaneously gives a thinner cup.
- **Boiling the milk.** Brings out off flavours. Heat to just below boiling.
- **Using flavoured tea bags.** Pure black tea (CTC Assam) is best for the base.
- **Using ground spices instead of whole.** Less aromatic intensity. Whole spices crush before adding.

Drink Me Chai sachets, the shortcut

If you don't have 10 minutes: empty Drink Me Chai sachet into a mug, add 200ml hot water, stir vigorously. The result is sweeter and more processed than home brewed but takes 30 seconds. More on Drink Me Chai.

FAQ

Best black tea for chai latte? CTC Assam, malty body holds up to milk and spices. Yorkshire Tea Original works.

How is this different from café chai latte? Most cafés use sweetened concentrate. Home brewed with whole spices is significantly more aromatic and less sweet.

Best milk for chai latte? Whole dairy for richness; oat milk for plant based.

Can I make ahead? Yes, brew the concentrate, refrigerate up to 4 days. Add fresh milk per serving.

Caffeine per cup? 30-50mg from the tea base. Decaf or rooibos versions: minimal/none.

Curator's note: home brewed chai latte beats every café version I've ever had. £0.50 per cup, 10 minutes total, dramatically better cup. The recipe above is the one I make most weekends. Lee, teas.co.uk, Tunbridge Wells.

This is the café style recipe; the traditional simmered method is chai from scratch, the product map is the chai category, and the background is the chai pillar. The only real trick is brewing the base strong enough to

survive the milk. A base or concentrate is in the full tea shop or a Pukka chai.

Round it off with the chai range.

Reference noted

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

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · A shelf of chai you trust beats a shelf of chai you don't. Rotate two or three that you make most often.

Chai recipe companion notes

- Chai from scratch recipe
- Chai tea (the pillar)
- Caffeine free chai
- Black tea

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- Chai Latte

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