Dandelion Tea: Roasted Root and Leaf Brewing

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Dandelion tea, in summary:** Dandelion tea: the traditional diuretic and digestive reputation, what the evidence supports, and the roasted root coffee alternative worth trying.

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

Dandelion tea is the coffee alternative growing in your lawn. Roasted dandelion root produces a dark, bitter, slightly nutty cup that really does resemble coffee, without the caffeine. Dandelion leaf produces a lighter, sharper, more grassy cup, traditionally drunk for liver support. Both have a long folk medicine history; the clinical evidence is modest but real for some applications. Properly made, dandelion tea is one of the most underestimated drinks on the herbal shelf.

The plant

Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*) is the bright yellow flower that ruins British lawns and rewards anyone who knows what to do with it. The whole plant is edible: leaves as salad greens, flowers in syrups and wines, root as a coffee substitute. Despite its weed status, dandelion has been used as food and medicine across European, Asian, and indigenous American traditions for centuries.

Two parts make tea:

- **Roots.** Harvested in autumn, washed, sliced, dried, then roasted. Used as coffee substitute.
- **Leaves.** Harvested young (before flowering), dried. Used as a herbal infusion.

Roasted dandelion root: the coffee alternative

Roasted dandelion root tea genuinely tastes coffee adjacent. The roasting process produces caramelised compounds with a similar Maillard browned profile to coffee. The cup is:

- **Dark.** Almost coffee coloured.
- **Bitter.** Less acidic than coffee; the bitterness is gentler.
- **Slightly nutty.** Earthy, with toasted notes.
- **Caffeine free.** 0mg.

It's not exactly like coffee, coffee aficionados won't be fooled. But for someone giving up caffeine or looking for an evening alternative to coffee, the cup is convincingly satisfying in the same flavour territory.

Dandelion leaf tea: the lighter version

Dandelion leaf tea is greener, lighter, and more bitter than the root version. Closer to nettle or green tea in profile. Traditionally drunk for liver and digestive support. Less drinker friendly than the root version but with broader herbal medicine pedigree.

What the evidence says

Claim	The current status
Diuretic effect (leaf)	a real, mild, fairly well supported effect
Liver / bile support (root)	traditional and plausible; limited human evidence
Digestion	traditional bitter tonic use; gentle, modest
Blood sugar and similar claims	preliminary lab and animal signals only
"Flushing out toxins"	marketing overreach; the body has its own liver and kidneys

The strongest real effect is the leaf's mild diuretic action; the root's traditional liver, bile and digestive bitter-tonic reputation is plausible and culturally durable but rests on limited human evidence; and the blood sugar and anti-inflammatory signals are preliminary lab and animal work, not grounds for treating it as a medicine. Talk of flushing out toxins is the usual overreach, since working liver and kidneys are not improved by an infusion. None of which is a reason to dismiss it: the real appeal is a cheap, caffeine free cup, not a treatment. This is general information, not medical advice.

How to brew roasted dandelion root

1. 1 tea bag or 1-2 tsp roasted root per 200ml.
2. Just boiled water (~95°C).
3. Steep 5-10 minutes (longer = stronger, more coffee like).
4. Optional: add a splash of milk and a teaspoon of sugar for a "café au lait" treatment. Properly satisfying as a hot drink.

For maximum coffee replacement effect: brew double strength (2 bags per cup, 10-minute steep), add milk and sugar.

How to brew dandelion leaf

1. 1 tea bag or 1 tsp dried leaf per 200ml.
2. Just boiled water.
3. Steep 5-7 minutes.
4. Sweeten with honey, brighten with lemon. The leaf tea benefits from balancing.

Buying dandelion tea in the UK

- **Pukka Cleanse.** Dandelion + aniseed + fennel + cardamom. Liver leaning blend. More Pukka here.
- **Twinings Cleanse.** A blend built around dandelion.
- **Heath & Heather Roasted Dandelion.** UK herbal brand. Pure roasted root.
- **Symingtons Dandelion Coffee.** Classic UK brand of roasted dandelion as a coffee substitute. Available in supermarket alternative coffee aisle.
- **Caro Coffee Substitute.** Mainstream brand including dandelion + chicory + barley + rye blend. Convenient option.
- **Specialist herbal suppliers.** Whole roasted dandelion root for grinding fresh.

Foraging dandelion (briefly)

Dandelion is one of the safest plants to forage, no toxic lookalikes in the UK. Three rules:

1. **Choose unsprayed sites.** Lawns treated with weedkiller are unusable. Hedgerows, wild meadows, untreated gardens are fine.
2. **Harvest young leaves before flowering.** Older leaves get bitter.
3. **Roots: dig in autumn, wash thoroughly, slice, dry on a tray for several weeks, roast at 150°C until dark brown.**

Foraged dandelion root produces a fresher, more flavourful cup than commercial, but commercial is convenient and the difference is modest unless you're going deep into hedgerow tea culture.

Cautions worth knowing

- **Allergies.** Dandelion is in the Asteraceae family. Cross allergy risk with ragweed, daisies, chamomile. First time drinkers should start small.
- **Diuretic effect.** If on diuretic medication or with kidney conditions, discuss with GP.
- **Pregnancy.** Generally considered safe in moderate amounts; if unsure, check with your midwife.
- **Gallbladder conditions.** The choleretic effect (stimulating bile production) means dandelion is contraindicated in active gallstones or bile duct obstruction. Discuss with GP.
- **Drug interactions.** Possible interactions with diuretics, lithium, blood thinners. Discuss with GP if on multiple medications.

Caffeine

0mg. Dandelion is naturally caffeine free.

FAQ

Does dandelion tea taste like coffee? Roasted dandelion root tea is the closest non coffee drink to coffee, dark, bitter, slightly nutty. Not identical, but in the same flavour territory.

Is dandelion tea good for the liver? Traditional use; modest clinical evidence at supplement doses. Tea strength is gentler. Not a treatment for liver disease.

Is dandelion a diuretic? Yes, meaningfully. Don't drink it before bed unless you want to be up in the night.

Best dandelion coffee alternative UK? Symingtons Dandelion Coffee or Caro for accessible mainstream options. Heath & Heather Roasted Dandelion for purer single ingredient.

Can I forage my own dandelion? Yes, it's safe and easy. Choose unsprayed sites, harvest young leaves or autumn roots.

Curator's note: roasted dandelion root with milk and sugar is one of the great underrated hot drinks. Cheaper than coffee, kinder to your sleep, and there's something pleasing about drinking a cup of weed. Lee, teas.co.uk, Tunbridge Wells.

Buy roasted root or leaf in the herbal range, or browse the full tea shop.

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · The dandelion cup you finish is the right one. Leave the other roots and leaves until that one is sorted.

Dandelion companion reading

- Dandelion tea (the coffee alternative)
- Herbal tea overview
- Caffeine free teas
- What counts as tea

More from the tea wiki

- Green tea
- Black tea
- Oolong tea
- White tea
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