Iced Green Tea: Why Cold Brew Works Best

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Iced green tea, in summary:** Green tea most rewards cold brewing: cold water pulls sweetness and aroma while leaving tannin and caffeine behind, so iced green is smooth and barely bitter.

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

Iced green tea is the revelation that converts hot tea drinkers to cold brewing. Cold brewed sencha or Long Jing produces a smooth, naturally sweet, low bitter cup that's dramatically better than hot brewed then chilled green tea. Excellent summer drink, light and refreshing.

Why cold brewed green tea works so well

Hot brewing extracts everything quickly, including bitter tannins. Cold brewing extracts aromatic compounds and catechins more selectively, leaving most of the bitter compounds behind. The result:

- Smoother cup, no astringency
- Natural sweetness emerges (vegetal sweet rather than bitter)
- EGCG and other catechins preserved
- Slightly lower caffeine than hot brew (60-80% extracted)

The basic recipe

1. 4 green tea bags (or 4 tsp loose leaf sencha) per 1 litre cold filtered water.
2. Lidded jug or jar.
3. Refrigerate 6-8 hours.
4. Strain. Discard leaves.
5. Pour over plenty of ice and add a lemon slice.

Best green teas for iced

Sencha (Japanese)

The classic cold brew green. Fresh, vegetal, marine umami, naturally sweet when cold brewed. Single origin Japanese sencha produces the best results.

Long Jing / Bi Luo Chun (Chinese)

Premium pan fired Chinese greens. Slightly more aromatic and floral cold brewed. Excellent.

Genmaicha

Cold brewed genmaicha is unusual but excellent, toasty vegetal, lower caffeine because of rice content. More on genmaicha.

Hojicha (roasted green)

Toasted coffee adjacent character. Cold brewed hojicha is gentle and surprisingly refreshing.

Pukka Pure Green / Clipper Pure Green

Mainstream organic greens. Reasonable for daily cold brew use.

Avoid

Cheap supermarket bagged green tea, produces a flat, flavourless cold brew.

Variations

Iced green tea with lemon and honey

Cold brewed green + 1 tsp honey + slice of lemon = sweet citrus iced tea. Excellent.

Iced jasmine green tea

Cold brewed jasmine green tea is delicately floral. Beautiful summer drink.

Mint green iced tea

Cold brewed green tea + fresh mint sprigs in the brewing jar. Cooling, fragrant.

Iced matcha

2g matcha whisked with 50ml warm water; add 200ml cold water + ice. Different drink from cold brewed sencha; rich, bright green colour.

Iced matcha latte

2g matcha whisked + cold milk + ice + honey. More on matcha.

Sparkling iced green tea

Cold brewed green tea + sparkling water (50:50) + slice of lime + mint. Non alcoholic refreshment.

Caffeine

Cold brewed standard green tea: 20-30mg per 200ml cup (60-80% of hot brew). Cold brewed matcha: substantially higher (whole leaf consumed). Decaf green: 2-5mg.

Why iced green tea is good for you

- EGCG and other catechins preserved (some research suggests cold brewing actually retains MORE catechins than hot)
- L theanine intact (bright yet easy character)
- Natural sweetness without sugar
- Hydration without caffeine overload
- Modest cardiovascular benefits with regular consumption

More on green tea benefits.

Cold brew vs hot brew then chilled

Method	Pros	Cons
Cold brew	Smoother, less bitter, naturally sweet	Takes 6-8 hours
Hot brew + chill	Faster (15 mins)	Slightly more bitter, less aromatic

For green tea specifically, cold brew is significantly better. Worth planning ahead.

Storage

Keep cold brewed green tea covered in the fridge and drink it soon; its bright character fades as it sits, and we don't give a keeping time for home-made iced tea.

Equipment

- 1L jug or jar with lid
- Strainer (if loose leaf)
- Ice cubes
- Pretty glasses (presentation matters)

FAQ

Best green tea for iced? Cold brewed Japanese sencha or Chinese Long Jing. Premium loose leaf produces the best results.

How long to cold brew green tea? 6-8 hours in the fridge.

Caffeine? 20-30mg per cup. Lower than hot brewed equivalent.

Adding milk? Don't, milk binds catechins. Try lemon or honey instead.

Will it be bitter? Cold brewed green is dramatically less bitter than hot brewed. The smooth sweet character is the whole point.

Curator's note: cold brewed green tea is the single drink most likely to convert someone who "doesn't like green tea." The bitterness disappears; the natural sweetness emerges. Try it once with proper sencha and you'll see why. Lee, teas.co.uk, Tunbridge Wells.

Buy a base that shines cold: a green tea, a sencha, or browse the full tea shop.

Reference noted

- PubMed: Green tea catechins and human health
- PubMed: Polyphenols and chronic disease prevention

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · For iced green, cost per cup is the only price worth watching. Loose leaf green usually wins, with supermarket bags sometimes in the running.

Cold brew reading

- Iced tea guide
- How to make cold brew tea
- Iced black tea
- Green tea

More from the tea wiki

- Green tea
- Black tea
- Oolong tea
- White tea
- Herbal tea
- Caffeine in tea
- How to make tea properly
- Loose leaf vs teabag

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