Iced Tea Recipe UK: A Hard Water Method

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **UK iced tea, in summary:** UK iced tea works two ways; hot-brewed double-strength over ice, or cold-brewed overnight; filtered water for hard areas; homemade beats bottled.

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

British weather doesn't typically demand iced tea, but UK summers, especially the increasingly hot ones, are starting to. Iced tea is dramatically cheaper, less sugary, and more interesting than commercial iced drinks. Cold brewed or hot brewed then chilled, with lemon, mint, fruit, or sparkling water, the variations are endless.

The two iced tea methods

Method 1: Cold brew (smoother, no bitterness)

1. 4 tea bags or 4 tsp loose leaf per 1 litre of cold water.
2. Lidded jug or jar.
3. Refrigerate 4-12 hours (depending on tea type).
4. Strain.
5. Serve over ice, sweeten if desired.

Detailed cold brew guide.

Method 2: Hot brew + chill (faster)

1. Brew tea hot at double strength (4 bags in 500ml hot water, 5-minute steep).
2. Sweeten while hot if desired.
3. Pour over a jug of ice (which dilutes to drinking strength).
4. Add lemon, mint, or other extras.

Best teas for iced

Lemon Iced Black Tea (American Southern style)

- 4 bags Yorkshire Tea + 1 litre water
- Cold brew 6 hours OR hot brew strong + ice
- Add juice of 1 lemon
- Sweeten generously (3-4 tbsp sugar) for traditional Southern style; lightly for British
- Serve over ice with lemon wedges and mint

Iced Green Tea

- 4 sencha or Long Jing bags + 1 litre cold water
- Cold brew 6-8 hours
- Strain
- Serve over ice; optional honey + slice of lemon

Cold brewed green tea is naturally sweet without added sugar, one of the great revelations of summer drinking.

Iced Earl Grey

- 4 Earl Grey bags + 1 litre cold water
- Cold brew 4-6 hours (don't go longer, bergamot can go acrid)
- Strain
- Send it over ice with a wedge of lemon

Iced Hibiscus / Fruit Tea

- 4 hibiscus or fruit tea bags + 1 litre cold water
- Cold brew 4-6 hours
- Strain
- Serve over ice with mint and a slice of lime

Vivid pink red colour. Excellent for parties and kids.

Iced Mint Tea

- 4 Pukka Three Mint or Dragonfly Three Mint Medley bags + 1 litre cold water
- Cold brew 8 hours
- Serve over ice with fresh mint sprigs

Iced Chai (cold brew)

- 4 chai bags + 1 litre cold water
- Cold brew 8 hours
- Serve over ice with cold milk
- Optional: dust with cinnamon

Variations and additions

The classic Arnold Palmer

50% iced black tea + 50% lemonade. Refreshing, not too sweet, classic American golf course drink.

Sparkling iced tea

Brew strong tea concentrate. Pour 100ml concentrate over ice; top with 150ml sparkling water. Excellent for hibiscus, fruit, and Earl Grey.

Iced milk tea (Hong Kong style)

Strong brewed black tea + condensed milk + ice. Closer to dessert than refreshment. Use 2 bags Yorkshire Tea per 200ml + 2 tbsp condensed milk.

Bubble tea (boba)

Iced milk tea + tapioca pearls. The Taiwanese export that's now ubiquitous. Make at home with cooked tapioca pearls + your milk tea base.

Iced matcha latte

2g matcha whisked with 50ml warm water. Add 200ml cold milk. Pour over ice. Stir.

Sweetening considerations

- **Always sweeten while hot.** Sugar dissolves better in hot tea than iced. Make a "simple syrup" (sugar dissolved in hot water) for cold tea sweetening.
- **Honey works.** Stir into hot brew before chilling.
- **Stevia or other sweeteners.** For sugar free options.
- **UK preference is usually lighter than American Southern style.** A teaspoon of sugar per cup vs the American 4-5 teaspoons.

Garnish ideas

- Fresh lemon, lime, or orange slices
- Fresh mint sprigs
- Fresh berries (strawberries, raspberries)
- Cucumber slices (for green tea or Earl Grey)
- Sliced ginger
- Cinnamon stick (for chai or spiced iced tea)

Storage

Cover the jug, chill it, and drink the tea soon; we put no figure on how long iced tea from your own kitchen will keep.

Equipment

- 1L jug or jar with lid
- Strainer (if loose leaf)
- Ice cube tray
- Pretty glasses for serving (presentation matters with iced tea)

FAQ

Best UK tea for iced tea? Cold brewed sencha or Long Jing for green; cold brewed Earl Grey for citrus floral; cold brewed hibiscus for fruity refreshment.

Cold brew or hot brew? Cold brew for smoother, less bitter cup. Hot brew + ice for faster preparation.

How sweet should iced tea be? UK preference is lighter than American, a teaspoon of sugar or honey per 250ml cup is typical.

Caffeine in iced tea? Same as hot tea, depends on the type. Cold brewed extracts slightly less caffeine than hot.

How long does iced tea keep? Covered and chilled, it is best drunk soon, and we do not state how long home made iced tea keeps.

Curator's note: cold brewed Pukka Three Mint over ice with a slice of lemon is one of the great summer drinks. Cheaper, less sugary, and more interesting than any commercial iced tea on the supermarket shelf. Once you start making your own, you don't go back. Lee, teas.co.uk, Tunbridge Wells.

Quick reference: iced tea recipe UK

Aspect	Note
UK water hardness	Most of south-east UK is hard water; affects iced tea clarity and flavour
Hard-water fix	Use filtered water (Brita, ZeroWater) for cleaner iced tea
UK summer	Iced tea is an under-developed UK summer drink; a proper cup is rewarding
Bottled vs homemade	UK bottled iced teas are heavily-sweetened; homemade is meaningfully better
UK best brands	Yorkshire Tea, Twinings, Whittard, Teapigs all work for iced
Recipe basics	Hot-brew double-strength OR cold-brew loose-leaf 8-12 hours
Typical session	1L pitcher feeds 4 people 2 glasses each
Storage	Covered in the fridge; drink it soon

See the master iced tea guide, the iced tea recipes, or browse the full tea shop.

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · In a jug of iced tea, only the cost per cup matters. Loose leaf usually leads; the odd

supermarket bag keeps close.

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