Jasmine Tea Overview: Types, Grades, Brewing and Uses

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Jasmine tea, in summary:** The fast jasmine reference: real scented jasmine beats sprayed versions; judge by scenting rounds and the cooled cup, brew well off the boil, superb.

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

Jasmine tea is the traditional Chinese flower scented green tea, green tea layered with fresh jasmine flowers over hours or days, allowing the tea to absorb the floral aromatic. Properly made jasmine tea is one of the world's great floral teas, delicately sweet and unmistakably perfumed. Mass market versions use jasmine oil; the traditional layered scented versions are dramatically better.

How traditional jasmine tea is made

The proper Chinese method is layered scenting:

1. Green tea (typically Long Jing or a similar mid grade) is brought to the jasmine plantation.
2. Fresh jasmine flowers are picked just before they open.
3. The tea and flowers are layered in alternating sheets in large warehouses.
4. The tea absorbs the jasmine aromatic over 6-24 hours.
5. The flowers are removed (or sometimes left in for visual appeal).
6. The tea may be re scented multiple times with fresh flowers for premium grades.

Premium jasmine teas use 5-9 rounds of scenting. The aroma is properly integrated into the tea leaf rather than added on top.

The major jasmine tea types

Jasmine Pearl Tea

Premium jasmine. Tea leaves rolled into small pearls that unfurl when brewed. Multiple scenting rounds. Beautiful in clear glass teapots.

Jasmine Silver Needle

White tea + jasmine. Very delicate, premium tier.

Standard Chinese Jasmine

Loose jasmine green tea. Mid tier; commonly found in UK Chinese groceries.

Jasmine green tea bags

Mainstream UK supermarket option. Often uses jasmine oil rather than traditional layered scenting. Decent introductory tier.

What jasmine tea tastes like

Floral, slightly sweet, gently perfumed. The cup is pale yellow green with a distinctly aromatic top note. Premium jasmine has subtle complexity, multiple notes within the floral character. Lower tier jasmine smells more uniformly "jasmine" without nuance.

How to brew jasmine tea

1. 1 tsp loose jasmine tea (or 1 jasmine pearl) per 200ml.
2. Water at 75-80°C, NOT boiling. Same rule as plain green tea.
3. Steep 2-3 minutes.
4. Drink black.
5. For jasmine pearls: yields 3-4 infusions. Each subsequent steep can be 30-60 seconds longer.

The jasmine pearl experience

Brew jasmine pearls in a clear glass teapot. The tightly rolled pearls drop to the bottom; over 60-90 seconds, they unfurl into recognisable leaves. The visual is half the pleasure. Aromatic intensity peaks in the first infusion and fades gradually across subsequent infusions.

Caffeine

25-40mg per 200ml cup. Standard green tea range. Decaf jasmine variants exist (Twinings does one) at 2-5mg.

Use cases

- **Afternoon refreshment.** Light, fragrant, easy to sink into.
- **After dinner.** Floral character pairs with sweet desserts.
- **With Asian cuisine.** Traditional accompaniment to Chinese, Vietnamese, Thai meals.
- **Cold brewed iced tea.** Excellent. More on cold brew.
- **Special occasions.** The visual unfurling of jasmine pearls is dramatic.

Buying jasmine tea in the UK

- **Twinings Jasmine Tea.** Mainstream supermarket option. Reasonable.
- **Whittard Jasmine Pearl.** UK speciality. Premium pricing.

- **teas.co.uk, with trade friends in Mei Leaf, Postcard Teas and What Cha.** Specialist Chinese tea retailers, premium grades, traditional scenting.
- **Asian groceries.** Often best value for everyday loose jasmine.

The jasmine grade markers

- **Premium:** Multiple scenting rounds (5-9). Loose flowers visible. Vivid green colour. Complex aromatic.
- **Mid tier:** 2-3 scenting rounds. Adequate aromatic complexity.
- **Standard:** Single scenting or oil applied. Recognisable jasmine note but less complex.
- **Bottom:** Synthetic jasmine flavouring on poor quality tea. Avoid.

Cautions

- **Caffeine sensitivity.** Standard green tea level.
- **Iron absorption.** Tannins; drink between meals.
- **Pregnancy.** Within NHS caffeine limits is fine.

Cold brewed jasmine

Particularly excellent. Cold brewing preserves the floral aromatic while avoiding any astringency. 4 jasmine bags or 4 tsp loose leaf in 1L cold water, fridge 6-8 hours.

Cooking with jasmine tea

Jasmine works in cooking applications:

- Jasmine poached fish (white fish especially)
- Jasmine rice (use brewed jasmine tea as cooking liquid for rice, produces aromatic jasmine rice without specific jasmine rice)
- Jasmine ice cream or panna cotta
- Jasmine syrup for cocktails

FAQ

What is jasmine tea? Green tea (sometimes white tea) scented with fresh jasmine flowers, traditionally by layered scenting over hours.

Does jasmine tea contain real jasmine? Premium versions yes (layered scenting with fresh flowers). Bottom tier versions use synthetic jasmine flavouring.

Caffeinated? Yes, from the green tea base, at 25 to 40mg per cup. Decaf variants exist.

Best jasmine tea UK? Mei Leaf or What Cha for premium pearls; Twinings for accessible bagged.

How to recognise quality? Multiple scenting rounds, loose flowers visible, complex aromatic with subtle notes rather than uniform "jasmine."

Curator's note: jasmine pearls in a clear glass teapot, watching them unfurl as the cup brews, that's flavoured tea at its best. Worth spending up at least once for proper traditionally scented jasmine. Lee, teas.co.uk, Tunbridge Wells.

The essentials: jasmine grade markers

Grade	What to look for
Premium	5-9 scenting rounds, vivid base, complex subtle aromatic
Mid tier	2-3 scenting rounds, adequate complexity
Standard	Single scent or oil applied, flat recognisable note
Bottom	Synthetic flavouring on poor tea, avoid
Real test	The cooled cup, not the price or prettiness

Reference noted

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

Worth keeping on the shelf around this article: English Breakfast, Earl Grey, green tea, loose leaf tea, Darjeeling, oolong, and herbal tea. For more, the full tea shop ships free across the UK over £35.

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · One cup of properly scented jasmine beats five flavoured bags drunk in a hurry.

Jasmine tea reading

Continue with jasmine tea, jasmine pearls explained, the green tea family, scented vs flavoured tea and cold brew tea.

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