Lady Grey: The Lighter, Citrus Forward Earl Grey

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Lady Grey, in summary:** Lady Grey is a Twinings lighter Earl Grey, bergamot softened by Seville orange and lemon into a bright gentle cup, ideal if classic Earl Grey is too perfumed.

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

Lady Grey is the lighter, more citrus forward variant of Earl Grey, black tea + bergamot + Seville orange peel + lemon peel. Twinings invented it in the 1990s, named in honour of Mary Elizabeth Grey (wife of the 2nd Earl Grey). The cup is gentler, more refreshing, less perfumed than traditional Earl Grey. Excellent for drinkers who find Earl Grey too assertive.

The history

Lady Grey was created by Twinings in the 1990s as a softer alternative to traditional Earl Grey. The name honours Mary Elizabeth Grey, wife of Charles Grey (2nd Earl Grey, who lent his name to the original Earl Grey blend in the 1830s).

Twinings holds the trademark on "Lady Grey", other brands sell similar lighter Earl Grey blends but use different names (Whittard's "Lady Earl," etc.).

What's in Lady Grey

- **Black tea base.** Usually Ceylon led, sometimes with Chinese black additions.
- **Bergamot oil.** The Earl Grey signature, but at lower concentration than traditional.
- **Seville orange peel.** Bitter orange brightness.
- **Lemon peel.** Citrus brightness.
- **Cornflower petals (sometimes).** Visual decoration.

What it tastes like

Bright, citrus forward, gentle. The bergamot is present but not dominant, Seville orange and lemon contribute as much as the bergamot. Less perfumed than traditional Earl Grey; more refreshing, more drinkable for those who find Earl Grey overpowering.

Lady Grey vs Earl Grey

Attribute	Earl Grey	Lady Grey
Flavouring	Bergamot only	Bergamot + Seville orange + lemon
Bergamot intensity	High (defines the cup)	Lower (one of three citrus elements)
Cup character	Floral perfumed	Bright fresh citrussy
Body	Medium	Lighter
Best with	Lemon or milk	Lemon, occasionally milk
Steep time	3-3½ minutes	3-3½ minutes
Caffeine	40-50mg	40-50mg

How to brew Lady Grey

1. 1 bag per 200ml (or 1 tsp loose leaf).
2. Water at full rolling boil.
3. Steep 3-3½ minutes, same rule as Earl Grey, don't oversteep.
4. Drink black with a slice of lemon (best), or with a small amount of milk.
5. No sugar required if brewed correctly.

Use cases

- **For people who find Earl Grey too perfumed.** Lady Grey is more drinkable for many.
- **Afternoon tea.** Refined enough for a British afternoon tea.
- **With light foods.** Pastries, fruit, lemon cake, the citrus pairing is excellent.
- **Cold brewed iced tea.** Excellent, citrus character translates beautifully cold. More on cold brew.
- **Mocktails / cocktails.** Cold brewed Lady Grey with lemon and honey makes a pleasant non alcoholic drink.

Caffeine

40-50mg per 200ml cup. Standard British black tea range.

Variations

- **Twinings Lady Grey.** The original.
- **Whittard Lady Earl.** Comparable concept, different name.
- **Decaf Lady Grey.** Twinings does this. 2-5mg residual caffeine.
- **Specialist small blender versions.** Some premium blenders make their own Earl Grey + citrus blends.

Buying

Twinings Lady Grey is widely available in UK supermarkets and online. Specialist alternatives available through tea retailers.

Cautions

- **Caffeine sensitivity.** Standard black tea level.
- **Iron absorption.** Tannins; drink between meals.
- **Pregnancy.** Within NHS caffeine limits is fine.
- **Citrus sensitivity.** Some drinkers with citrus allergies should avoid; rare.

The Twinings naming

Twinings has used the "Lady Grey" trademark since the 1990s. Other UK brands sell similar lighter Earl Grey blends but cannot use the "Lady Grey" name, hence Whittard's "Lady Earl" and similar workarounds. The Twinings version remains the benchmark.

Cold brewed Lady Grey

Particularly excellent. The citrus brightness translates beautifully cold; bergamot oil character is preserved without astringency. 4 bags in 1L cold water, fridge 4-6 hours, serve over ice with lemon. One of the most underrated British iced tea options.

FAQ

What is Lady Grey? Twinings invention from the 1990s, Earl Grey style black tea + Seville orange + lemon peel. Lighter and more citrus forward than traditional Earl Grey.

Lady Grey vs Earl Grey? Lady Grey has more citrus elements (orange + lemon + bergamot); Earl Grey is bergamot only. Lady Grey is brighter and gentler.

Is it Twinings only? Yes, "Lady Grey" is a Twinings trademark. Other brands sell similar concepts under different names.

Pregnancy safe? Within caffeine limits is fine.

Best for cold brew? Yes, citrus character translates beautifully cold.

Curator's note: Lady Grey is the introduction to Earl Grey for drinkers who find traditional Earl Grey too perfumed. The Seville orange and lemon balance the bergamot beautifully. Underrated cup. Lee, teas.co.uk, Tunbridge Wells.

Reference noted

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

Sensible options on the same shelf: English Breakfast, Earl Grey, green tea, loose leaf tea, Darjeeling, oolong, and herbal tea. More in the tea shop; UK delivery on Lady Grey and the rest is free over £35.

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · Lady Grey or Earl, compare what each cup costs. Loose Lady Grey usually wins, though the supermarket bags sometimes do.

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