London Fog Recipe: The Earl Grey Tea Latte

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **The London Fog, in summary:** The London Fog is the Earl-Grey-tea-latte; strong Earl Grey + steamed milk + vanilla syrup; meaningfully better made at home with loose-leaf.

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

The London Fog is the Earl Grey tea latte, strong brewed Earl Grey, steamed milk, vanilla syrup. Despite the British sounding name, the drink is Canadian (invented in Vancouver in the 1990s). Café popular, surprisingly easy at home, and one of the great Earl Grey applications.

The basic recipe

Ingredients (single cup)

- 2 Earl Grey tea bags (or 2 tsp loose leaf)
- 120ml water
- 120ml whole milk (or oat milk)
- 1 tsp vanilla syrup (or ½ tsp vanilla extract + ½ tsp sugar)
- Optional: foam topping

Method

1. **Brew strong Earl Grey.** 2 bags in 120ml just boiled water. Steep 4 minutes (slightly longer than usual to compensate for dilution).
2. **Heat the milk.** 120ml whole milk to just below boiling. Optional: froth with a milk frother or wand.
3. **Combine.** In a large mug: brewed Earl Grey + steamed milk + vanilla syrup. Stir.
4. **Top with foam.** If you frothed the milk, spoon the foam onto the top.
5. **Optional: dust with cinnamon or vanilla powder.**

The history

The London Fog was created in Vancouver, Canada, in the 1990s, usually credited to a barista at the Buckwheat Café in Vancouver who created it for a regular customer. The name calls up British tea culture

(Earl Grey + foggy London) but the drink is firmly North American. It spread through US/Canadian café chains in the 2000s and is now widely served.

Variations

Iced London Fog

Brew strong Earl Grey concentrate. Cool. Pour 100ml concentrate over ice; add 100ml cold milk; vanilla syrup to taste.

Lavender London Fog

Use lavender Earl Grey (Pukka Lavender Earl Grey works beautifully) instead of plain Earl Grey. Add lavender syrup instead of vanilla. Floral version.

Honey London Fog

Replace vanilla syrup with honey. Sweeter, more natural.

Caffeine free London Fog

Use Dragonfly Earl Grey Rooibos or Twinings Decaf Earl Grey. Same recipe, no caffeine. More on caffeine free Earl Grey.

Vegan London Fog

Use oat milk or barista blend almond milk. Both work beautifully. Oat milk is the closest to dairy in mouthfeel.

Stronger London Fog

Use 3 Earl Grey bags + slightly less water. More assertive bergamot character.

Equipment

You don't need a steam wand. Options:

- **Saucepan + whisk.** Heat milk; whisk briskly to froth.
- **Handheld milk frother (£8-12).** Wand style frother. Cheap and effective.
- **Milk frothing pitcher.** For café quality foam at home.
- **Espresso machine with steam wand.** If you have one already.

None of these are required. A teapot + microwave warmed milk + spoon stirred vanilla does the job fine.

Best Earl Grey for London Fog

- **Twinings Earl Grey.** Reliable mainstream option.
- **Hyson Earl Grey.** Slightly more refined Sri Lankan base. More Hyson here.
- **Pukka Lavender Earl Grey.** Adds floral lavender note.
- **Whittard Earl Grey.** Premium UK speciality.

- **Avoid:** Cheap supermarket Earl Grey using synthetic bergamot, produces a perfumed soapy latte.

The vanilla syrup question

Café London Fogs typically use commercial vanilla syrup (Monin, Torani). At home:

- **Buy commercial vanilla syrup.** Convenient.
- **Make your own.** 200g sugar dissolved in 200ml hot water + 1 tsp vanilla extract + ½ vanilla pod scraped. Bottle and refrigerate.
- **Use vanilla extract + sugar separately.** ½ tsp vanilla extract + ½ tsp sugar in the cup.
- **Skip the vanilla.** Plain Earl Grey latte (steamed milk, no syrup). Simpler.

Caffeine

40-50mg per cup (from the Earl Grey). Comparable to a strong cup of black tea or a cola. Decaf and rooibos versions: minimal/none.

Use cases

- **Café style afternoon comfort drink.**
- **Coffee alternative.** Lower caffeine than coffee, similar comfort drink format.
- **Pregnancy or caffeine sensitive drinking** (with decaf or rooibos version).
- **Visitor / treat drink.** Feels special, easy to make.
- **Iced summer version.** Refreshing cold weather alternative.

Cautions

- **Caffeine sensitivity.** Earl Grey is standard black tea caffeine; switch to decaf or rooibos if needed.
- **Sugar content.** Vanilla syrup adds sugar; reduce or skip for sugar conscious drinkers.

FAQ

What is a London Fog? Earl Grey tea + steamed milk + vanilla syrup. A Canadian invented Earl Grey latte.

Is it British? Despite the name, no, invented in Vancouver, Canada, in the 1990s.

Caffeine? 40-50mg per cup from the Earl Grey base.

Can I make it without a steam wand? Yes, heat milk in a saucepan or microwave; whisk briskly for froth. Or use a £8 handheld frother.

Best Earl Grey for it? Twinings, Hyson, or Pukka Lavender Earl Grey. Avoid cheap supermarket Earl Grey with synthetic bergamot.

Curator's note: London Fog is one of the best uses of Earl Grey. The vanilla and milk soften the bergamot beautifully without masking it. Try it once on a cold afternoon. Lee, teas.co.uk, Tunbridge Wells.

Quick reference: London Fog recipe

Aspect	The note
Origin	Mary Loria, Buckwheat Cafe, Vancouver, late 1990s
Base	Strong Earl Grey tea, brewed concentrated
Milk	Steamed whole or oat milk; the second core ingredient
Sweetener	Vanilla syrup; the third core ingredient
Cup size	~250ml mug; coffee-shop standard
Best tea	Premium loose-leaf Earl Grey with real bergamot oil
Variation	Lavender Fog (lavender syrup); Honey Fog (honey)
Buying signal	Loose-leaf premium Earl Grey for the cup that justifies the recipe

Reference noted

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

If this piece pointed you somewhere, these are the obvious places to land: English Breakfast, Earl Grey, green tea, loose leaf tea, Darjeeling, oolong, and herbal tea. Shop the tea range at teas.co.uk for London Fog Earl Greys; UK delivery is free past £35.

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · A homemade London Fog costs little per cup, which is the price that matters. Loose Earl Grey usually wins, though decent bags sometimes do too.

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