French Tisanes: The Rochambeau Tradition

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **French tisanes, in summary:** French tisanes are a centuries-old herbal-infusion tradition; verveine, tilleul, camomille, menthe each suited to a specific evening use case.

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

Rochambeau is the French herbal tisane brand we stock for the European tisane tradition, verbena, linden flower, lemon balm, mint blends in the classical French herbalism style. Lighter and more aromatic than UK herbal teas, and sold with far fewer claims. The bedtime tisane culture of provincial France in tea bag form.

About the French tisane tradition

"Tisane" is the technically correct French word for herbal infusion (vs "tea" which means Camellia sinensis). French tisane culture differs from British herbal tea:

- **Single ingredient or simple blends.** Pure verbena, pure tilleul (linden flower), pure mint, rather than complex functional blends of many herbs.
- **Drunk without sweetener.** Often.
- **An after dinner habit.** Tisane after meals; tisane before bed.
- **Provincial and regional traditions.** Specific herb growing regions (Provence for lavender, etc.).
- **Less hyped.** Tisanes are food/drink, not "supplements."

The Rochambeau range

Rochambeau's UK imported range typically includes:

Verveine (Lemon Verbena)

The classic French tisane. Bright, lemony, aromatic. Drunk after meals throughout France. A settling character.

Tilleul (Linden Flower)

Sweet, floral, a soft wind down. Traditional bedtime tisane in France and Germany. The French equivalent of British chamomile.

Menthe (Mint)

French mint tisane, usually peppermint, sometimes spearmint. Drunk after meals.

Mélisse (Lemon Balm)

A mild, citrus leaning tisane for winding down. More on lemon balm.

Various blended tisanes

Verbena + mint; lemon balm + linden; etc. French style simple blends.

What French tisanes taste like

Generally lighter, more aromatic, less assertive than British herbal teas. The French tradition prefers letting individual herbs express themselves rather than masking with sweetener or combining many herbs.

How French drinkers use tisanes

After dinner ("infusion après le repas")

Standard French dinner ends with verbena, mint, or linden tisane. Aids digestion, marks end of meal.

Before bed

Linden flower (tilleul) is the bedtime tisane equivalent of British chamomile.

During illness

Hot tisane with honey for sore throats and colds.

Café and brasserie service

Most French cafés serve tisanes alongside coffee and tea.

How to brew French tisanes

1. 1 bag (or 1 tsp dried herb) per 200ml.
2. Just boiled water.
3. Cover the cup. Steep 5-7 minutes.
4. Drink black, French tradition is generally unsweetened.
5. Optional: small amount of honey for very strong flavours or during illness.

How French tisanes compare to UK herbal teas

Attribute	French tisanes	UK herbal teas
Style	Single herb / simple	Functional blends of many herbs
Sweetening	Often unsweetened	Often sweetened (honey common)
Marketing	Food/drink	Wellness positioned

Use occasion	After meals, before bed	Throughout the day for various claimed effects
Common herbs	Verbena, tilleul, mint, lemon balm	Chamomile, peppermint, ginger, fruit

Use cases

- **UK resident French expats:** wanting familiar tisanes.
- **UK drinkers exploring European herbal traditions.**
- **An after dinner habit.** Following French tradition.
- **Pure single herb drinking.** Without the marketing of UK functional blends.
- **Unwinding evening drink.** Verbena or linden are excellent bedtime alternatives.

Caffeine

0mg. All Rochambeau tisanes are caffeine free.

Buying in the UK

Limited availability, French food specialty shops, French cafés, online importers including teas.co.uk.

The verdict

French tisanes differ from UK herbal teas: gentler, more aromatic and less hyped. Worth knowing about for drinkers exploring European herbal traditions. The verveine (lemon verbena) is particularly worth trying, distinctive, refreshing, no UK herbal equivalent.

FAQ

What is a French tisane? Single herb or simple herbal infusion in the French tradition. "Tisane" technically excludes Camellia sinensis (real tea).

Best Rochambeau product? Verveine (lemon verbena) for distinctive French character. Tilleul (linden) for bedtime.

How is it different from UK herbal tea? Lighter, simpler, sold with fewer claims, more "drink" than "supplement."

Caffeine? 0mg.

Where to buy in UK? French food specialty shops; specialist tea retailers including teas.co.uk.

Curator's note: French tisane culture is one of the great underexplored herbal tea traditions in UK retail. Lemon verbena (verveine) after a heavy meal beats most UK after dinner herbal blends. Worth exploring. Lee, teas.co.uk, Tunbridge Wells.

What you need to know: French tisane tradition

Aspect	The note
Origin	Centuries-old French herbal-infusion (tisane) tradition

Aspect	The note
Verbena	Lemon verbena (verveine); the French staple tisane
Tilleul	Linden flower; the classic for rest and sleep
Camomille	French chamomile; differs from UK chamomile
Menthe	Mint tisane; post-meal digestive standard
Rochambeau	Modern French tisane brand; classic blends in UK distribution
Brewing	Boiling water 5-10 minutes; gentler aromatics than tea
Buying signal	Single-named herb (verveine, tilleul) over generic "herbal blend"

More on French tisanes

- Rochambeau deep dive
- Tea vs tisane
- Lemon verbena tea
- Herbal tea

Shopping notes for this topic: English Breakfast, Earl Grey, green tea, loose leaf tea, Darjeeling, oolong, and herbal tea. Browse the wider tea range; French tisanes, from single bags up, ship free across the UK above £35.

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · Single herb tisanes are cheap per cup, which is the measure that counts. Loose verbena or linden usually wins, though bags sometimes do too.

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- Green tea
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