Rosehip: From Hedgerow to Shelf

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Rosehip, in summary:** Rosehip is the UK-heritage hedgerow fruit; available across heritage brands, organic premium and DIY foraging; an accessible herbal-tea ingredient.

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

Rosehip is the dried fruit of the wild rose (Rosa canina), naturally vitamin C rich, traditionally used as a wartime British vitamin source, and one of the few herbal teas with a meaningful nutritional profile beyond polyphenols. The cup is tart sweet, fruit forward, and works beautifully cold brewed in summer.

The plant

Wild dog rose (*Rosa canina*) is the British hedgerow's most common rose species. After flowering in early summer, the plant produces small red orange fruits ("hips") that ripen in autumn. Rosehips are picked, dried, and used for tea, syrup, and traditional medicine.

Cultivated rose varieties also produce hips but wild rose is preferred for tea (richer flavour, higher vitamin content).

The vitamin C heritage

Rosehip became famous in Britain during WWII when imported citrus fruit was unavailable. The Ministry of Health organised volunteer rosehip picking campaigns; harvested rosehips were processed into "Rosehip Syrup" and distributed nationally as a vitamin C source. Children of the 1940s-60s grew up on Delrosa and similar rosehip syrups.

Nutritional content

Per 100g of fresh rosehip:

- **Vitamin C:** 400-1500mg, among the highest natural concentrations of any fruit.
- **Lycopene and beta carotene:** Significant.
- **Vitamin K and B complex:** Notable.
- **Polyphenols and anthocyanins:** Antioxidant load.

Drying reduces vitamin C content somewhat. Tea brewing extracts a portion. Don't drink rosehip tea expecting clinical grade vitamin C, eat actual rosehips, take a supplement, or eat citrus for serious vitamin C needs.

What rosehip tea tastes like

Tart sweet, fruit forward, slightly cranberry like. The cup is amber pink. Drinks pleasantly on its own or sweetened with honey.

The actual evidence

Vitamin C contribution (modest)

Tea brewing extracts a fraction of rosehip's vitamin C. Real but small contribution.

Joint pain / arthritis (modest)

Some clinical evidence for rosehip extract reducing osteoarthritis pain. Galactolipids appear to be part of the story. Tea strength is gentler than supplement strength.

Diuretic effect (mild)

Traditional use; mild diuretic activity.

Skin (preliminary)

Rosehip oil topically has some evidence for skin support. Drinking rosehip tea has weaker direct skin evidence.

How to brew rosehip tea

1. 1 tea bag (or 1-2 tsp dried rosehip) per 200ml.
2. Just boiled water.
3. Steep 7-10 minutes, rosehip benefits from longer extraction.
4. Sweeten with honey to soften the tartness.

Common rosehip blends

- **Rosehip + hibiscus.** Tart fruit double; vivid colour. More on hibiscus.
- **Rosehip + apple.** Sweet and fruity.
- **Rosehip + raspberry.** Berry forward.
- **Rosehip + nettle.** Spring tonic style blend.
- **Rosehip + elderberry.** Cold and flu support blend.

Rosehip syrup tradition

Beyond tea, the British rosehip syrup tradition continues:

- **Delrosa Rosehip Syrup.** A classic British brand; a concentrated vitamin C source.
- **Homemade rosehip syrup.** Foraged hips + sugar + water; preserved.

Syrup contains more concentrated vitamin C than tea strength brewing.

Foraging UK rosehips

Wild rosehips are easy to forage:

1. Pick after first frost (autumn), frost softens hips and concentrates sugars.
2. Choose unsprayed sites, hedgerows, woodland edges.
3. Wear gloves (rose thorns).
4. Remove the irritant hairs inside (use blender + sieve, or split and clean by hand).
5. Dry on tray for tea storage; use fresh for syrup.

UK rosehip products

- **Pukka Berry Beautiful.** Includes rosehip alongside other fruit.
- **Twinings Rosehip & Hibiscus.** Mainstream blend.
- **Heath & Heather Rosehip.** UK herbal pure rosehip option.
- **Foraged.** Free, fresher, more characterful.

Caffeine

0mg.

Use cases

- **Cold and flu support.** Vitamin C contribution + warming hydration.
- **Iced summer drinking.** Cold brewed rosehip is excellent.
- **Children's drink.** Naturally fruity, no caffeine.
- **Pregnancy.** Generally considered safe in moderation.
- **Mild joint pain support.** Modest evidence for galactolipids.

Cautions

- **Tooth enamel.** Tart fruit teas can erode enamel with daily exposure. Drink and rinse with water.
- **Iron absorption.** Vitamin C content actually HELPS iron absorption, drink with iron rich meals if iron deficient.
- **Blood thinners.** Vitamin K content theoretically interacts with warfarin.
- **Pregnancy.** Rosehip in pregnancy: NHS guidance allows up to 4 cups of herbal tea a day and says avoid liquorice root. Ask your midwife or pharmacist if unsure.

FAQ

Is rosehip tea high in vitamin C? Fresh rosehips yes, exceptionally so. Tea brewing extracts a fraction; modest contribution.

Caffeine? 0mg.

Pregnancy safe? Rosehip in pregnancy: NHS guidance allows up to 4 cups of herbal tea a day and says avoid liquorice root. Ask your midwife or pharmacist if unsure.

Best brand UK? Pukka or Heath & Heather; foraged for the freshest cup.

Helps cold symptoms? Modest direct effect; a warm drink really does help.

Curator's note: rosehip tea is one of the most British herbal traditions worth knowing about. The wartime vitamin C heritage gives it cultural depth; the cup is a useful, fruit forward, caffeine free option. Foraging your own connects you to the tradition. Lee, teas.co.uk, Tunbridge Wells.

The essentials: UK rosehip products and foraging

Aspect	The note
Wild source	UK hedgerows September-November; Rosa canina dog rose
UK heritage	WWII rosehip-syrup-for-children official programme 1941-1957
Heath & Heather rosehip	UK heritage brand; standard supermarket pack
Clipper rosehip blends	Organic rosehip-hibiscus and rosehip-fruit blends
Pukka rosehip blends	Premium organic; wellbeing-positioning
Whittard rosehip blends	Premium fruit blends with rosehip + hibiscus base
Foraging tip	Pick after first frost (softer hips, more aromatic)
Buying signal	Whole-rosehip pieces over crushed-dust grade

More on rosehip

- Rosehip tea
- Hibiscus
- Herbal tea
- Caffeine-free tea

Worth keeping on the shelf around this article: English Breakfast, Earl Grey, green tea, loose leaf tea, Darjeeling, oolong, and herbal tea. The rest of the tea shop sits here, rosehip included, with UK shipping free above £35.

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · Foraged rosehips cost nothing; bought ones are judged per cup. Loose dried rosehip usually wins, though bags can run it close.

More from the tea wiki

- Green tea
- Black tea
- Oolong tea
- White tea
- Herbal tea
- Caffeine in tea
- How to make tea properly
- Loose leaf vs teabag

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