

# The Sobeys Guide to Tea

Tea is such a pleasure: Its aromas, flavours and warmth invite relaxation. Best of all, there's a taste for every palate. Here's how to make and enjoy the perfect cup.

## What Is Tea?

A brewed beverage made by infusing the leaves of *Camellia sinensis*, a species of evergreen shrub, in hot water. The very same leaves become totally different teas, depending on the stage of growth at which they're picked and how they're handled. These teas fall into four categories: green, white, oolong and black.

## What Is Herbal Tea?

A brewed beverage made by infusing plants other than *Camellia sinensis*. Herbal teas can be created from any part of a plant, including the roots, leaves, seeds, flowers and fruits.



## Types of Teas



### Green tea

**COLOUR**  
light to deep green

**FLAVOUR**  
fresh, grassy

**POPULAR VARIETIES**  
gunpowder, jasmine, matcha, sencha

**WATER TEMP.; STEEP TIME**  
185°F (80°C); 1-3 min.



### White tea

**COLOUR**  
light golden

**FLAVOUR**  
slightly sweet

**POPULAR VARIETIES**  
White Peony, Silver Needle

**WATER TEMP.; STEEP TIME**  
185°F (80°C); 2-5 min.



### Oolong tea

**COLOUR**  
deep golden

**FLAVOUR**  
aromatic, between green and black tea

**POPULAR VARIETIES**  
Black Dragon, Formosa oolong

**WATER TEMP.; STEEP TIME**  
185°F (80°C); 2-3 min.



### Black tea

**COLOUR**  
deep amber

**FLAVOUR**  
rich, tannic

**POPULAR VARIETIES**  
orange pekoe, Earl Grey, Darjeeling, Assam, Ceylon, English Breakfast, Lapsang souchong

**WATER TEMP.; STEEP TIME**  
212°F (100°C); 4 min.



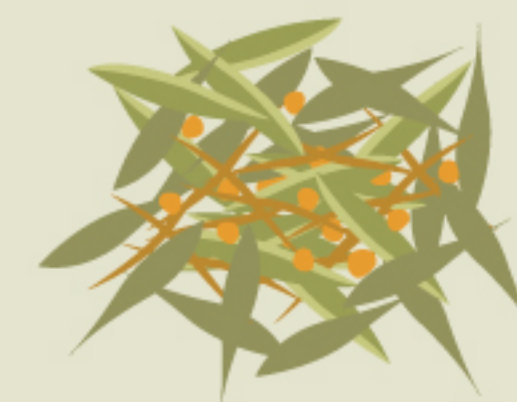
### Rooibos tea

**COLOUR**  
rich red

**FLAVOUR**  
gentle, grassy, sweet and earthy; blends well with herbs and other flavourings

**POPULAR VARIETIES**  
regular (oxidized) rooibos, green (unoxidized) rooibos, custom blends

**WATER TEMP.; STEEP TIME**  
212°F (100°C); 3-6 min.



### Herbal tea

**COLOUR**  
a rainbow of different hues

**FLAVOUR**  
enormous variety of flavours, both single-source (think peppermint or chamomile tea) or blended (think sleep-inducing or energizing blends)

**POPULAR VARIETIES**  
peppermint, chamomile, thousands of custom blends

**WATER TEMP.; STEEP TIME**  
212°F (100°C); 3-6 min.

## The Formula

Different teas require different brewing times, water temperatures and amounts. Here's a general guideline, but follow the instructions for your particular tea to ensure the tastiest experience.



## The Essentials

### Tasty tannins

Take a sip of black, green or even rooibos tea, and you'll notice your cheeks get a puckery, dry feeling. The source: tannins, the same astringent substance found in red wines that gives both beverages body and pleasant bitterness. (Note they can get out of hand if tea is steeped too long.)

### The H<sub>2</sub>O

Use fresh filtered tap water for the best flavour. Always dump out an old kettleful and boil up a new batch – it contains more oxygen to activate the tea.

### Cover up

Covering a cup that's steeping – especially an herbal tea – traps all the volatile oils and aromas in the cup. Without a lid, you lose the precious scents and tastes that make the tea so pleasing.

### What is chai?

Chai is the Hindi word for “tea” in general, but it usually refers to a blend of black tea and spices, including cardamom, cinnamon, ginger, cloves and pepper. It's often served with milk and sweetener.

### Caffeine and tea

Many types of tea contain caffeine, though you can find decaffeinated options. Rooibos and lots of herbal teas have no caffeine, making them great for relaxing in the evening.

### More tea, not more time

If you like strong tea, add more to your cup and stick to the recommended steeping time. Letting it sit longer can bring out too much bitterness and create a muddy, metallic taste.