



TEA CENSUS **2022**

THE SECRETS OF OUR NATION'S TEACUPS

FOREWORD

Dr Sharon Hall, head of the UK Tea and Infusions Association



If there's something the Brits do well, it's popping on the kettle and brewing a good cup of tea. For many of us it's a necessity first thing in the morning, and for others, a tea break at work is a time to pop the kettle on and socialise. In fact, as a nation, we consume a whopping 100 million cups of tea every single day¹.

But have you ever been intrigued as to the thoughts and feelings around a humble cup of tea? Or perhaps you would like to know the nation's hotly debated tea-making routine (FYI it's tea bag, water, brew, bag out, milk and stir)? What are Brits snacking on when they sip? And when is the preferred time for tea?

Now, the UK Tea and Infusions Association (UKTIA) has gathered the answers to all our tea questions and compiled them together in the Tea Census Report 2022.

Tea, a drink adored by Brits, is far from a recent phenomenon.

Tea, made from the leaves of the tea bush *Camellia sinensis*, was originally brought into the UK from China back in the 16th century. However, when Charles II married Portuguese princess and tea addict, Catherine of Braganza, tea's popularity grew, becoming popular with the wealthier Brits. In 1664, the East India Company imported its first order of tea into Britain² - 100lbs of China tea to be shipped from Java. You could say, since then, the rest is history.



Today, our nation is spoilt for choice when it comes to tea. From black, green and oolong teas to a myriad of herbal infusions, there's loose leaf tea and tea bags to suit every personality, taste, and occasion.

Speaking of the historic love of tea, Dr Sharon Hall, head of the UK Tea & Infusions Association says tea is a national treasure for Brits, a staple of the diet in fact.

"Thanks to tea being very much a national treasure, we wanted to delve deeper into our nation's tea habits, so the Tea Census was born, offering a fascinating insight into the types of tea we are drinking and when, the division of tea habits, as well as looking into our primary motivators for popping on the kettle and making a brew."

Dr Sharon Hall adds: "It's the classic black tea - with or without milk - that hits the spot for most Brits as just under three quarters have voted this tea to be their favourite and many respondents in the Tea Census admitted to making their way through several cups each day."

Although tea can be a real thirst quencher as well as a means of socialising, our love of tea runs far deeper as many respondents said they turn to tea when they're emotional and or warm themselves up with a cuppa. It's a hug in a mug, a loyal friend, and a calming aid...there's just so much more to a cup of tea.

Here, we share the ins and outs of the eye-opening Tea Census as well as a deeper understanding of tea itself and the smart ways we can ensure we save time, money and energy when we make a cuppa. So, pop the kettle on, put your feet up, and venture into the world of tea.

“ IT'S A HUG IN A MUG, A LOYAL FRIEND, AND A CALMING AID... THERE'S JUST SO MUCH MORE TO A CUP OF TEA ”

1: FOUR NATIONS, ONE LOVE OF TEA

A cup of tea is a kickstart to the day, a means of bringing people together, a thirst quencher, a perfect biscuit dunker and even a warm hug in a mug.

Of course, whilst a cup of tea might conjure up an image of a classic Builder's Brew for many Brits, there are several types of tea, to suit your mood, personality, and time of day.

"Along with black, green and oolong teas from the *Camellia sinensis* plant, there are also a wealth of herbals and fruit tea infusions, from fruity, minty, flowery, sweet and spicy," says Dr Sharon Hall.

Describing herbal infusions, sometimes referred to as botanicals, Dr Sharon Hall explains they are, an infusion of leaves, roots, bark, seeds, flowers, or fruits. "Herbal infusions do not originate from the tea plant but, like tea, they should be brewed with freshly boiled water."

According to Tea & Herbal Infusions Europe (THIE) up to 300 different plants and 400 parts of plants, including leaves, fruits or flowers, are used for making herbal and fruit tea infusions.

In a real-world research study commissioned by the UKTIA, not one single respondent in the Tea Census said that they didn't drink tea³, which further proves how there really is a type of tea for everyone. Plus, drinking tea isn't just a means to stay hydrated, it's a ritual; something we enjoy every single day.

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TEA DRINKING HABITS

With a global pandemic that kicked off in 2020, came a new way of working. Now working from home, as well as splitting work hours between home and office, has become the norm for many of us.

Just over 56% of those questioned in the Tea Census Poll now work in an office, with the other 44% working from home or a mix of office and home.

For those who work in an office:

- Just under a third (29%) drink two cups of tea during their working hours
- 24% drink three cups of tea and 6% told us they drink more than five cups a day.

Working from home does seem to lead to more tea drinking as 14% drink more than five cups, and 36% drink three to four cups during the working hours.

Despite tea seemingly being an ideal accompaniment to a day's work, the majority of people (54%) drink most of their tea at home.

Many Brits (43%) drink tea as soon as they get up and 39% like to drink tea with breakfast, however 44% admit that they tend to opt for mid-morning as their tea time. It really is the perfect elevenses beverage. However, if respondents were given one opportunity a day to drink a cup of tea, the majority would choose to drink one as soon as they woke up.

SEASONAL BEHAVIOURS

The time of year can play a part in the nation's tea drinking habits too and it seems that most of us see it as a bit of a winter warmer - a hug in a mug - with 49% of those questioned in the Tea Census claiming to drink more tea during the winter months. This was followed by 32% who drink more tea during the autumn.

Only 7% said they drink more tea during summer.

LIFTING SPIRITS

The humble cup of tea can also help to lift spirits. Many respondents admitted to sipping on a cup of tea to help with certain emotions such as when they were feeling down (14%), upset (12%) or lonely (9%).

Because after all, when life throws you curveballs, the best thing you can do is 'make a brew!'

// **MANY RESPONDENTS ADMITTED TO SIPPING ON A CUP OF TEA TO HELP WITH CERTAIN EMOTIONS** //





As a nation, do we know much about the tea we are drinking and the differences between various types of tea? How willing are we to try a new type of tea?

When asked what teas people prefer, the Tea Census found nearly three quarters of those questioned (74%) drink black tea with or without milk, whilst 55% drink green tea and just under half (47%) also enjoy herbal infusions.

- 40% drink black tea with or without milk, several times a day
- 10% drink several cups of green tea a day

The majority of herbal infusions mentioned in the Tea Census, including liquorice, fennel seed, yerba mate, ginger, and lemon balm, were drunk less frequently than weekly.

Green tea, chamomile and peppermint were the most likely alternatives to black tea to be drunk a couple of times a week with 24% enjoying green tea, 21% drinking chamomile and 20% sipping on peppermint.

DID
YOU
KNOW

Black, green and oolong tea all come from the same plant, the tea bush *Camellia sinensis*. It's actually the different preparation of the leaves in tea factories that produces the various types of tea.



BRITS' TEA KNOWLEDGE

Although the UK has a reputation for being avid tea lovers, how much do we really know about this popular beverage? Although most of us in the UK drink black tea, often with milk, when asked where regular black comes from most said China (39%) or India (37%).

Dr Sharon Hall explains that actually, most of the tea we drink in the UK comes from Kenya. "It is often blended with teas from other origins, such as full bodied Assams from India, or Ceylon from Sri Lanka for a mellow flavour, or black teas from other east African countries such as Rwanda for brightness."

Tea is now grown in more than 60 countries around the world, and you might be surprised to hear that some tea is grown very close to home in the UK and on the Channel Island of Jersey. Whilst there are some wonderful teas being grown closer to home, we actually import around 100,000 metric tons of tea each year to provide for the one hundred million cups a day we drink in the UK, as we just couldn't produce that much domestically.

In the Tea Census, the 1000 people polled were asked if they had heard of different types of tea. Earl Grey and English Breakfast (blended black tea) are well known, whilst less people had heard of Darjeeling or Assam black teas from India, Gyokuro green tea from Japan, Long Jing (or Dragon Well) green tea from China or Oolong tea, often said to be the ultimate choice if you think you don't like tea.

Traditionally from China's Fujian province and Taiwan, Oolongs are semioxidised teas that vary from greenish rolled oolongs (these give a light, floral liquor reminiscent of lily of the valley, narcissus, orchid, or hyacinth) to dark brown leaf oolongs (these yield liquors with deeper, earthier flavours and hints of peach and apricot).

Want to discover more about different types of tea and the countries where they are grown? Tune into our Around the World in 80 Teas series at [YouTube.com/UKTalkingTea](https://www.youtube.com/UKTalkingTea).

DID
YOU
KNOW

Tea, which is culturally important in many societies, is a big contributor to health, culture and socioeconomic development and actually supports the livelihoods of over 13 million people. The United Nations⁴ says the tea industry doesn't just provide income and export revenues for some of the poorest countries but it also provides jobs. The UN adds that tea production and processing contributes the Sustainable Development Goals including the reduction of extreme poverty (Goal 1), the fight against hunger (Goal 2), the empowerment of women (Goal 5) and the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems (Goal 15).

Because of tea's importance the UN has designated 21 May as International Tea Day, an annual observance of the important role tea plays in the lives of people all over the world
#InternationalTeaDay #TeaDay

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3: TEA BREAKS AND RITUALS

A cup of tea is so much more than simply a cup of tea. In fact, judging by the latest real-world research poll by UKTIA, it is an important part of many people's day and provides a host of benefits.

Making a cup of tea is also an art in itself, and something that we as a nation are very particular about.

"Taking a tea break at work is an essential part of the day, and Brits really do love a tea break to help split up the rhythm of a working day — with 38% saying they take two a day during work hours and 12% saying they take more than three." says Dr Sharon Hall.

A third of respondents (31%) revealed their tea break was 10 to 15 minutes long with another third (32%) enjoying a tea break of around five to 10 minutes. There also seems to be a small percentage (5%) of people who go all out, enjoying a tea break of between 25 and 30 minutes.

And in true British style, 57% of those questioned said tea was their favourite drink to consume during their break with just a quarter (24%) sipping on a coffee instead.

TEA MAKING RITUALS AND HABITS

The art of brewing a cup of tea isn't something to be taken lightly. From the mug used through to the order of tea making events, everyone has their own individual way of doing things; it's what makes tea time such a great time.

Nearly half (44%) have their own mug in the work cupboard and reuse it, whilst 26% of respondents in the Tea Census actually bring in their own mug each day to work, and over half (57%) claim to have their own special mug. Impressively, 15% even have their own spoon!

With water taking a few minutes to boil in most conventional kettles, it's the perfect opportunity to have a quick stretch (15%) or even meditate (8%).

Some tea lovers (11%) like to think about good memories as the water is boiling with another 11% closing their eyes and dreaming of somewhere exotic, perhaps a far flung destination away from work!



TEA BREW COLOURS

Everyone likes their tea a certain way. We're a nation divided by the strength of tea. Whilst 37% said they preferred their tea very strong or strong, another 37% said they prefer their tea to be of medium strength.

Just 1% said that a Builder's Brew (strong, dark, and sugary) was their favourite and 6% said they love a milky brew.

The majority (57%) add dairy milk to their tea with 10% opting for plant-based milk and 7% going the full hog and adding cream to their brew for something a little more luxurious. Just over a quarter (27%) add sugar, for a touch of sweetness.

Much like the infamous scone debate (is it jam first or cream?) there's also much debate over the order in which tea making ingredients are added to the cup. The majority of Brits (69%) opt for the tea bag first, followed by hot water, milk, a stir with a spoon and then sugar.

However, there are some (22%) who opt for milk or sugar before the teabag and a fifth (19%) put the sugar in before the hot water.

Another key question that seems to garner mixed responses: how long do you leave the teabag in for?

- Just over one quarter (28%) said the tea bag is left in for one to two minutes when making a classic black tea whilst 17% said two to three minutes and 16% said less than one minute.



- Some Brits really do want to ensure a strong tea flavour as 4% either leave the bag in for six or more minutes, or just never take it out!

Then there's the dippers; 4% claim to pop the teabag in and out, creating a lighter tea flavour.

For herbal teas, the teabag brew time differed slightly as 16% either leave their teabag in for six or more minutes, or just never take it out. However, 41% leave their herbal teabag in for between two and six minutes.

Tea temperature comes into play too as nearly half (44%) like their tea hot but pleasantly drinkable immediately. A third (33%) wait a while before drinking tea to get the temperature just right.

TEA AND FOOD PAIRING

Alongside a warming brew, comes a tasty snack and it seems that the humble biscuit comes out on top with 44% admitting to indulging in this sweet treat alongside their tea. In fact, 29% indulge in several biscuits!

As a nation of biscuit lovers, it seems that the tea and biscuit combination really are a match made in heaven.

Just over a quarter (28%) pair their tea with a slice of cake, and 15% prefer a sandwich, a savoury alternative.

So, what is the nation doing whilst sipping on their cup of tea?

We're a sociable nation; 38% enjoy chatting to work colleagues whilst 32% will make a phone call. Of the people questioned, 32% said their tea break is about connecting with others.

All this chatting though can lead to a cold cuppa, so just over a quarter of people (26%), pop their tea in the microwave to warm it back up, whilst 12% pour in the extra boiling water from the kettle for instant heat.

Other tea break activities include:

- catching up on social media (38%)
- doing a puzzle or Wordle (16%)
- watching TV (15%)
- Only 5% use the time to just sit and think

It makes sense then that the majority of the Tea Census respondents described their tea break as relaxing or calming. Just over a third (34%) say that it's 'essential', further reinforcing the fact that a tea break is a pivotal point of the day.

OF THE PEOPLE QUESTIONED,
 32% SAID THEIR TEA BREAK IS
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 WITH OTHERS**



There's more to the tea break than just sipping on a brew. Nearly half (48%) say it's about taking five minutes out and 47% say it helps to recharge the batteries.

Could we live without tea? It seems as though we'd struggle. And adventurer, climber, intrepid explorer and tea lover, Andrew Hughes, knows how essential tea is.

Andrew Hughes, carried both packet and loose leaf teas for himself and his team of 15 as they climbed Mt Everest in May 2021. The teas included black and green teas, peppermint to aid digestion and chamomile to help aid sleep.

Their love of tea at a high level led to them landing a spot in the Guinness Book of World Records for the highest tea party in history. Andrew and his team drank tea on Mount Everest, Nepal, at Camp 2 on May 5, 2021, at a height of 6,496 metres.

"Tea was a big part of life on our Everest expedition," said Andrew. "From the tea houses and lodges where we stayed along the trek, to the countless hours spent with one another with a warm cup of tea in hand awaiting weather windows to climb onwards — tea is something that we shared so regularly that it is impossible to detach it from the overall Everest experience," he said. Much like Andrew and his epic climb, tea is entwined into the lives of Brits, from morning till night.



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TEA FEELINGS

The humble cup of tea can conjure up an array of feelings, and these feelings can fluctuate throughout the year.

"Teas and the seasons go hand in hand, with regular black tea being the number one choice throughout spring, summer, winter, and autumn. The warming herbal chamomile is also associated more with winter and is one of the most popular infusions in the world," says Dr Sharon Hall.

Fruit infusions are popular in summer with 26% of respondents saying they associate fruitier teas with the warmer months. Peppermint tea also tends to be connected with the warmer spring and summer months.

Plus, interestingly, Brits would like to think that their choice of tea reflects their personality type.

Well over a third (38%) say they hope their tea choice says they are traditional, while 31% say they hope it makes them seem down to earth. Perhaps this is the perception of the humble cup of tea with milk.

Then there's the 15% that would like their tea choice to make people assume they are health conscious and 11% hope it says they have an expensive taste.

TEA: HOME AND AWAY

Regardless of what our tea represents, when we are away from our usual routine, many of us may miss switching on the kettle and making a brew.

This was confirmed with the results of the Tea Census which found that the thing people look forward to the most when returning home from work trips or holidays, is a nice cuppa (48%).

Over a third (35%) look forward to putting their feet up (presumably many respondents would love to do this with a tasty brew!) and 17% want to catch up with friends.



WHY DOES TEA
MAKE US FEEL

OH-SO COSY?

Over half (52%) of the nation said it was thanks to cuddling a hot mug or cup and 44% said it was the taste, whilst for 38% it was just some time to themselves.



However, tea is so much more than a warming beverage, even though 10% say they drink it because they're cold.

46% say a cup of tea gets them going in the morning

29% of Brits say it gives them the energy to do their job

21% of those polled say a cuppa is their superpower in a mug

18% say a brew helps them face a difficult email or conversation

Some just drink tea as they want an excuse to be sociable!

TEA AND MOODS

The type of tea drunk will also vary depending on someone's mood - as noted by 56% of the respondents.

The primary tea that Brits turn to when they're experiencing an emotion such as feeling lonely, nostalgic, bored, sad, angry, motivated, or happy, is normal black tea, with or without milk.



THERE'S THE 15% WHO DRINK TEA BECAUSE THEY **WANT A BREAK** FROM WORK OR LIFE AND THE 20% WHO SAY **THEY DRINK IT BECAUSE THEY NEED OR WANT TO RELAX**



Many (29%) turn to chamomile in a bid to destress, and fruit infusions was also a popular choice when respondents were feeling dreamy or in a good mood.

And (although we hope that this never happens!), if us Brits were told we couldn't have tea for a day it would trigger a range of emotions.

- A quarter (26%) of those respondents polled said they would miss it terribly
- 41% of Brits would be upset, angry or saddened
- 13% admitted that they don't think they could actually go a full day without their tea
- 10% would actually refuse to believe they could not have a cuppa.

Why? Well, there are a vast array of primary motivators for drinking tea with only 13% actually choosing to drink it because they are thirsty. There's the 15% who drink tea because they want a break from work or life and the 20% who say they drink it because they need or want to relax.

Tea is so entrenched in our lives that 10% drink it purely because of routine, saying that they choose to make a brew because that's the time they would normally have it.



5: LOVING PLANET EARTH

Taking the correct measures to be more environmentally friendly has never been more prevalent than it is today.

Even the way in which we make our tea can be adapted to have a more positive impact on our planet with the new UKTIA Smart Boil campaign highlighting the easy steps we can take to make our brew a little more planet friendly.

New research data that the Tea Census analysed has revealed that eight in 10 Brits waste energy by overfilling the kettle when making a cuppa, with experts calculating that it wastes a whopping 2,649,792 kWh of electricity to boil the extra water. This electricity is enough to provide all the energy needs for 74.7 households for a year⁵!

In fact, out of 1000 UK tea drinkers questioned, fewer than one in five boiled the recommended amount of water when making a single mug of tea⁶, with almost half boiling three or more times the water they needed.

For most of us, filling the kettle to brew a cuppa has become routine; it's second nature, and something we do without even thinking. However, just making some small changes can help lower the environmental impact whilst also helping to lower the cost of consumer's energy bills.

And with 2022 seeing a steep rise in energy costs, there's never been a better time to practice smart boiling. In fact, 10% of those questioned in the Tea Census said they only drink tea to keep themselves warm; a potential indication that the cost of energy is already becoming too much for some.

The waste of electricity used to boil extra, unwanted water, could add a staggering £742,000 a year to the nation's bills!

With 100 million cups of tea being drunk daily by Brits, brewing a cuppa is clearly a non-negotiable activity for many. In fact, the Tea Census found nearly half of respondents (47%) would actually feel emotional without their cup of tea, admitting that they'd feel lost, angry, saddened, or upset.

So, let's maintain our tea habits and do what we can to keep costs low.

Most of us (85%) agreed in the Tea Census that boiling only the water you need can save on energy costs. We know what to do, so let's do it!

Speaking about a new Smart Boil campaign being rolled out across the UK by the UKTIA, Dr Sharon Hall says: "We created the Smart Boil campaign to highlight simple ways to reduce your energy use by boiling only the water you need. Using your mug to measure out the water you need for one or two cuppas is easy to do, yet our survey found that only a third of people were doing this routinely.

"Just making this small change to your lifestyle can help cut 618 tons of carbon emissions per day — the equivalent of 1.5 million miles in journeys in the average family car⁷."

Dr Sharon Hall adds: "There is no doubt that reducing greenhouse gases will require action on all fronts, and this should be led by governments around the world. The real strength of our Smart Boil Campaign is that everyone can do their bit. It doesn't involve any major changes or having to give up anything we enjoy. In fact, quite the opposite.

"Boiling only the amount of water you need, and only once, will reduce energy bills and improve the taste of your tea. In fact, to draw the best flavour out of the tea, the water must contain oxygen to 'energise' the leaf and extract all the character of the tea. If you top up the kettle, water is repeatedly reboiled which drives out the oxygen and makes the tea taste dull. So, using the right amount of freshly drawn water will deliver a great-tasting cuppa."

And if you do boil more than you need? Avoid wasting it and use the water for other tasks, something which one in 10 already do.

While a frugal one in 10 used the hot water for other household tasks, 70% left it to cool down and simply boiled it again for the next cuppa, but a further one in 10 chucked the water away.

There's always a use for water!





LAST WORD

Dr Sharon Hall, head of the UK Tea and Infusions Association and **Andrew Hughes** - adventurer, climber, intrepid explorer, and tea lover

The Tea Census offers brilliant insight into the nation's tea habits, from how we brew our perfect cup of tea, to the key motivators behind popping on the kettle for a tasty cuppa. Tea drinking is a daily ritual and something that Brits will no doubt continue to incorporate into their lives for generations to come.

No matter who we are and what we do, tea helps to bring us all together. From the tea break chatter in the office, to cuddling a flask of tea while out walking, through to bonding up Mount Everest with a mug of tea à la Andrew Hughes and his team...tea unites us all.

Plus, tea is beneficial for our body too, as Andrew revealed when he discussed his record-breaking tea party.

"When we were on our climb up Mount Everest, tea became a useful tool, not just as a tasty beverage, but also as a tool for hydration up high.

"Climbers brought with them a variety of teas, such as peppermint or ginger to aid in stomach issues that often occur at high altitude or chamomile to reduce stress and aid in trying to steal some sleep amidst the stormy nights. Black or green teas with caffeine can often help mitigate some of the symptoms of altitude sickness, like headaches."

// NO MATTER WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO, TEA HELPS TO BRING US ALL TOGETHER **//**

Judging by the Tea Census, it's clear that brewing up a tasty cuppa isn't just a case of tea bag, water, and milk, as we all seem to have our own way of doing things. Dr Sharon Hall has revealed that there are a few key pointers to abide by for the perfect Great British brew.

"Be sure to use a good quality tea bag or loose leaf tea, store your tea in a cool, dry place and avoid placing it next to strongly flavoured or perfumed foods."

Dr Sharon Hall explained that it's best to use freshly drawn water when preparing tea (or a herbal infusion) and that you may want to consider using a water filter.

"This is because, in some parts of the country the tap water is hard or soft and this can affect the taste of the tea."

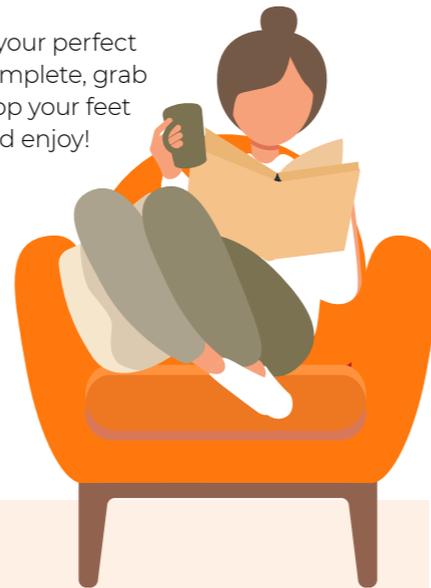
As Dr Sharon Hall previously explained, it's best to only boil the amount of water you need, as well as ensuring you measure the tea carefully; use one tea bag or one rounded teaspoon of loose tea for each cup to be served.

"Allow the tea to brew for the recommended time before pouring, always read the instructions on the pack and if you're brewing tea from a bag in a mug, adding milk last is best.

"Remove the bag after brewing, before adding the milk," she adds.

As a rough guide for brewing times, most black teas should be brewed for three to four minutes, with Lapsang Souchong black tea tasting best after four to five minutes. Brew green tea for three to four minutes and oolong tea for three to five minutes, depending on strength preference.

And when your perfect cuppa is complete, grab a biscuit, pop your feet up, relax and enjoy!



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