

taste-test Which chai will wrap you in wintertime warmth?

Spice Islands

A steaming mug of chai can be just the thing to break through the season's icy outer layer, and if you don't feel like making your own recipe from scratch, a concentrate can be the next best thing. Made with black tea and a blend of spices, like cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg and black pepper, chai concentrates simply require the addition of milk, some heat and a stir, and they're ready to go. We tasted six concentrates with both hot milk and hot soy and found that while we enjoyed several of them, one in particular yielded a perfect blend of black tea, sweetness and spice.

Tazo Organic Chai Tea Concentrate

★★★

Aroma: Very light and subdued.

Flavor: Moderately sweet with a light tea flavor and a hint of nutmeg.

Finish: Sweet with a trace of cinnamon.

Overall: Sweetness on the finish overwhelms spice and tea notes; better with dairy milk than with soy.



Rishi Masala Chai Tea Concentrate

★★★★★

Aroma: Robust and spicy with notes of cardamom and cloves.

Flavor: Strong black tea flavor with a balanced blend of cinnamon, clove, cardamom and black pepper notes; lightly sweet.

Finish: Light, smooth and clean with a nice peppery kick and traces of black tea; not too sweet.

Overall: Boldly nuanced; nicely balances black tea profile with varied spices and light sweetness; equally delicious when mixed with both dairy milk and soy; great candidate for iced chai.



★★★★★
Exceptional

★★★★
Very Good

★★★
Good

★★
Fair

★
Not Recommended

Oregon Original Chai Tea Latte Concentrate

★★

Aroma: Very light with notes of milk and honey.

Flavor: Very sweet with notes of vanilla and graham cracker; no notable tea or spice flavor.

Finish: Very sweet.

Overall: Lacks much depth of flavor and tastes more like a vanilla steamer; better with dairy milk, as soy dominates flavor.



Intelligentsia Chai Tea Concentrate

★★★★

Aroma: Notes of black tea and cinnamon.

Flavor: Clean black tea notes with a hint of clove and cinnamon; light sweetness.

Finish: Smooth and delicate with traces of white pepper and black tea.

Overall: Mixes well with both dairy milk and soy; nicely nuanced; good choice for those who prefer less-spiced chai.



The Chai Company Authentic Chai

★★★

Aroma: Very light; sweet milk.

Flavor: Lightly sweet with hints of cinnamon, clove and nutmeg.

Finish: Honeycomb with just a trace of spice and tea tannin.

Overall: Mixes well with both dairy and soy, but may be too mild for those wanting a stronger chai.



Third Street Authentic Chai

★★★★

Aroma: Expressive, with cardamom, black pepper and lots of ginger.

Flavor: Noticeable black tea flavor with spiced notes of ginger and cardamom.

Finish: Clean and peppery with some tea tannins.

Overall: Strikes a good balance between sweetness and spice; flavorful and nuanced when mixed with dairy milk, but spices become too subdued with soy.

