



Frequently Asked Question

What are the optimal water temperatures for brewing?



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Whether you're steeping a delicate white tea or extracting the bold complexity of a pour-over coffee, the temperature of your water plays a vital role in determining flavour, aroma, and body. This article explores the optimal water temperatures for various types of tea and coffee, using water from a controlled kettle or water dispenser, not by placing ingredients directly into the device, but by using it purely as a heating tool for the water used.

Why Water Temperature Matters

Water temperature affects the rate and extent to which flavours, oils, tannins, and caffeine are extracted from tea leaves or coffee grounds. Too hot, and you risk extracting bitter or burnt notes; too cool, and the brew may taste flat or underdeveloped.

A temperature-controlled device ensures water is heated to the exact degree needed, which is especially important since different brews call for different temperatures. Once the water is heated, it should be poured over the tea leaves or coffee grounds in a dedicated brewing vessel, such as a teapot, French press, V60 dripper, or gaiwan.

Coffee Brewing Temperatures

Coffee is sensitive to water temperature, especially because the roast level and grind size interact with heat to influence extraction.

General Brewing

- 91°C - 96°C (195°F - 205°F)
- Ideal for most brewing methods: pour-over, French press, AeroPress, drip machines.

Espresso

- 88°C - 94°C (190°F - 201°F)
- Requires pressurised machines, but if preheating your portafilter or steaming water is needed, aim within this range.
- Lighter roasts often favour slightly higher temperatures for full flavour development.

Cold Brew

- Not heated, but worth noting: room temperature or refrigerated water over a 12-24 hour steep time.

Brewing Tips

- Always preheat your brewing vessel (e.g., French press, pour-over carafe) with hot water before beginning.
- Don't boil the water, as boiling (100°C) water can scorch lighter roasts and cause bitterness.

Tea Brewing Temperatures

Tea is more delicate than coffee in many respects, and using boiling water can damage or overwhelm subtle flavours, especially in green and white teas.

White Tea

- 70°C - 80°C (158°F - 176°F)
- Example: Silver Needle, White Peony
- Low temperature preserves delicate floral and sweet flavours.
- Steep time: 4-5 minutes

Green Tea

- 70°C - 85°C (158°F - 185°F)
- Example: Sencha, Dragon Well, Gyokuro
- Higher temps can cause bitterness from tannins. Japanese greens usually need lower temperatures (around 70°C), while Chinese greens tolerate slightly higher.
- Steep time: 1-3 minutes

Oolong Tea

- 85°C - 95°C (185°F - 203°F)
- Example: Tie Guan Yin, Da Hong Pao
- Partially oxidised teas that thrive in hotter water to express fruity and floral notes.
- Steep time: 2-5 minutes (multiple infusions often possible)

Black Tea

- 90°C - 96°C (194°F - 205°F)
- Example: Assam, Darjeeling (2nd flush), Earl Grey
- Black tea requires near-boiling water to release full-bodied flavour and colour.
- Steep time: 3-5 minutes

Pu-erh Tea (Ripe & Aged)

- 95°C - 100°C (203°F - 212°F)
- Example: Shou Pu-erh, aged Sheng Pu-erh
- High heat helps unlock complex earthy and woody notes.
- Steep time: 2-5 minutes, with multiple short infusions.

Herbal and Tisanes

- 95°C - 100°C (203°F - 212°F)
- Example: Chamomile, Peppermint, Rooibos
- These caffeine-free blends need boiling water for full extraction of essential oils and flavours.
- Steep time: 5-7 minutes (or longer)

BEVERAGE TYPE	IDEAL TEMPERATURE	NOTES
White Tea	70 - 80°C	Use cooler water to protect delicate leaves
Green Tea	70 - 85°C	Lower range for Japanese, higher for Chinese
Oolong Tea	85 - 95°C	Adjust based on oxidation level
Black Tea	90 - 96°C	Full extraction needs high heat
Pu-erh Tea	95 - 100°C	Rinse leaves briefly with hot water before brewing
Herbal/Tisanes	95 - 100°C	Use fully boiling water
Standard Coffee	91 - 96°C	Most brewing methods, ideal flavour extraction
Espresso	88 - 94°C	For machine tuning and precise control

Conclusion

Achieving optimal flavour in coffee and tea starts with the right water temperature. A temperature-controlled kettle or water dispenser is an essential tool for any home barista or tea enthusiast who wants to elevate their brewing process. Just remember: always use the kettle or dispenser as a precise water heating tool, and **never as a brewing vessel**. With practice and precision, you'll unlock the full potential of your favourite beverages, one perfect cup at a time.

The information provided here is for general information use only. Ensure to assess your specific situation and apply what is correct for your given circumstances.