

Find Your Perfect Teapot

How to I choose a teapot?

Having the right teapot can truly enhance your tea drinking experience. Even though you may love the old teapot that you inherited from your grandmother, there's nothing wrong with having more than one.

Many people who drink tea often have a standard, dark-colored pot for regular use that won't become discolored by the tannins in the tea. But why not have a fun or fancy pot or two for your own enjoyment or when serving tea to guests?

Keep these tips in mind when choosing a teapot, whether it's new or a vintage pot that you have spotted at an antique shop or in grandma's basement:

-Do you like the look? Part of the fun of drinking tea from a teapot is that you simply like to look at it sitting on the table.

-Check the spout. Is the top of the spout level with the top of the pot (this will help prevent tea from dribbling out as you pour).

-Check the handle. When you lift the pot, the handle should be positioned so it doesn't strain your wrist, and there should be enough space between the handle and the pot so your knuckles don't get burned.

How Take Care Of Your Teapot

How do I clean a teapot?

Keep your tea tasting its best by following some of these tips for a tip-top teapot:

-Don't use detergent. Using detergent on the inside of your teapot can affect the taste of the tea. Instead, rinse with fresh water.

-Remove tannin stains from the inside of a teapot by periodically soaking the teapot for several hours in a solution of hot water and baking soda.

-Rinse well and you are ready to use.

-Be sure to use fresh water in your teapot every time you make tea. Oxygen is needed for the ideal brewing of tea, and water that has been boiled already won't have enough oxygen to help bring out the best flavor in your next cup.

Because tannins build up in teapots, even with regular cleaning, consider dedicating a specific teapot to different types of tea—one pot for black tea, one pot for green tea,

and one pot for herbal infusions. Not only does that make your tea experience more fun, but preserves the maximum flavor of each type of tea.

Two Types Of Tea Kettles

What is an electric kettle?

When choosing a tea kettle, you have two basic categories: an electric kettle or a stovetop model. Both have their pros and cons, as follows:

-Electric: Many people swear by the convenience of an electric kettle. An electric kettle is an especially good choice for tea-loving students away at school who don't have easy access to a stove. An electric kettle plugs in anywhere and heats quickly, and these kettles are available in a variety of styles and sizes.

-Stovetop: Many tea enthusiasts keep the stovetop tea kettle on the stove at all times, so it is ready to go at a moment's notice. If that sounds like you, consider a stovetop kettle that matches your other kitchen appliances or kitchen décor. You can find kettles in shapes and styles from an old-fashioned stainless steel RevereWare kettle to a modern Chantal kettle.

Of course, some people have both an electric and stovetop kettle. Some electric kettles have bases that plug in so you can leave the base in place and remove the kettle alone for easy filling, while others are cordless.

Tea Caddies Keep Countertops Clean

What is a tea caddy?

If you are having loose tea, your must-have accessories include a tea strainer or disposable tea bags.

If you drink your tea from tea bags (even occasionally), a tea caddy is a must-have item. This simple but essential accessory is nothing more than a small dish designed to hold your tea bag when you remove it from your cup or mug. You should use a tea caddy even if your teacup has a matching saucer, so you avoid the risk of having any excess tea from the damp bag slosh out of the saucer and onto you!

Tea caddies are available in fun shapes such as teapots, flowers, or animals, and they can be made of china, porcelain, pewter, metal, ceramic, or even fine wood. You can match your kitchen or suit your personal style. If you have multiple tea drinkers in your household, customize the tea caddies so there is something for everyone.

A tea caddy makes a great hostess gift for your favorite tea drinker, or it can be a charming component to a tea-themed gift basket with a collection of fine teas.

Tea Sets For The Total Tea Experience

Are there different styles of tea sets?

When time permits, enhance your enjoyment of tea by making up a pot and sharing it with someone else. That's where a tea set can add to the experience. A tea set generally includes a tea pot and 2 or 4 matching tea cups.

When you think of a tea set, does a flowery Victorian style come to mind? Or is your taste more contemporary? You can find a tea set to suit any style. And there's no need to stop with one. You can swap tea sets to suit the season, the type of tea, or your mood. For example, serve your green tea in an Asian-style pot and matching tea cups, and use your retro 1950s teapot and tea cups for your favorite ginger peach tea.

And a tea set makes a great gift for your favorite tea drinker—you can never have too many. Also, tea gift sets, that include a variety of types of tea along with a teacup and infuser, will be a hit for a birthday or holiday.

Tea Cups For Every Taste

Is there an ideal tea cup?

Many tea lovers agree that tea tastes best when drunk from a china or porcelain cup. According to British tea expert Mrs. Beeton, the ideal tea cup is 4 inches high, 3 inches in diameter at the top, and 1 to 1.5 inches in diameter at the bottom. Tea stays warmer longer in porcelain or enamel compared with shallow, wider tea cups or with stoneware or pottery cups or mugs.

That said, your taste in tea cups may be as varied as your taste in tea. And why not have variety? Keep some fancy tea cup and saucer sets on hand for when you have guests, but when you're on the go, boil some water, grab a tea bag and insulated travel mug, and you are ready for action. Or for a convenient cup of loose tea, try an infuser teacup such as Mighty Leaf's retro infuser teacup, which includes an enamel teacup, a stainless steel infuser and a lid that serves as a tea caddy for the infuser when you remove it from the cup.

Two Tips For Your Best Brew

How do I brew the best cup of tea?

While loose tea leaves provide a distinctive and subtle flavor, today's tea bags are of such quality that it's hard to tell the difference when you are enjoying your favorite flavor. Mighty Leaf's unique silken tea pouches are hand-crafted and biodegradable. They are true tea drinking accessories that allow the full flavor of your favorite tea to come through, so it's quick and easy to enjoy your tea anytime in any setting.

Whether you are having your tea loose or bagged, keep these two tips in mind for a perfect brew:

- Amount of tea: If you are using loose tea, the standard amount of tea for a 12-ounce cup is 1 rounded teaspoon for black tea, 1 rounded teaspoon for oolong tea, 1 level tablespoon for green tea, 1 rounded tablespoon for white and 1 rounded tablespoon for herbal. Feel free to vary amounts depending your taste preference as well. If you are using a teabag or tea pouch, use one bag for a 12-ounce cup.
- Quality of water. The better your water tastes, the better your tea will taste. Ideally, use filtered or bottled water that contains no chemicals (but don't use distilled water). If you are using tap water, allow the water to run for about 10 seconds to become cold before adding it to your tea kettle.

Loose Tea Made Easy With These Teatime Accessories

How can I make loose tea without a pot and strainer?

If you love loose tea but don't have the time or inclination to make an entire pot, don't despair. Whether you drink loose tea daily or only occasionally, you will enjoy it even more if you have the right tea drinking accessories on hand. You may already have tea cups, a tea caddy, or even a full tea service, but these other items can come in handy, too:

-Infuser: If you want to make a single serving of loose tea without prepping and preparing a full pot, a tea infuser is a must-have item. Infusers are available in many styles and sizes, from a stainless steel wand or infuser spoon that makes a single cup of tea to a plastic infuser that's large enough to put into a teapot.

-Filter bags. Do you love the flavor of loose tea but don't want do deal with a strainer or infuser? Paper filter bags allow you to make your own teabag. Put 1-3 spoonfuls of loose tea into the bag (depending on how strong you like your tea), place it in your cup, and add hot water.

Keep Your Tea Cozy

What is a tea cosy?

A tea cosy is a tea accessory that serves a purpose—it actually does keep your pot of tea warm. Tea cozies (also spelled cosies) fall into two styles:

-Dome: This style of cosy simply drops over the top of your teapot like a hat.

-“Snuggie:” This style of cosy fits around the pot and has slits in either side to accommodate the spout and the handle, with a drawstring top to secure it at the top of the pot. This style allows you to pour the tea without removing the cosy.

If putting a cover (even a cute one) on your teapot doesn't appeal to you, you can keep your teapot warm by placing it on a tea warmer. A tea warmer is a small stand, often made of glass or cast iron, with a space for a votive candle, also called a "tea candle." Light the candle and place your teapot on the warmer, and the tea may stay warm for hours.

Complete Your Tea Ensemble With These Teaware Items

What teaware do I need for a tea party?

Of course, all you really need to enjoy a cup of tea is the tea and the cup. But if you are going to embrace the social aspect of afternoon tea and invite a friend or two to join you, these teaware items will keep things flowing:

-Creamer and sugar set. A matched set of a cream pitcher and sugar bowl doesn't have to match your teapot, your kitchen, or anything else, but setting out a sugar bowl and cream pitcher (even if it has skim milk or a flavored creamer) allows your guests to flavor their tea to taste.

-Teaspoons. You've invited someone over for tea—why not use a cute teaspoon? A demitasse spoon is the perfect tea accessory for stirring in that bit of cream and sugar. It makes a great baby spoon, too.

-Honey pots and drippers. Honey is a tasty accompaniment to many kinds of tea. If you like honey in your tea, these specialized items allow you to gradually drip in the ideal amount. You can buy a honey pot together with a dripper, or buy a dripper separately to use in your own honey jar.