

How to make the perfect cup of tea: British Standards Institution issues new guide

Experts have got together to create a scientific formula for the perfect brew

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The British Standard's Institution has released a guide called "preparation of a liquor of tea for use in sensory tests".

In plain English, professional organisations and experts collaborated to create a scientific formula for the perfect cup of tea. The British Tea Producers' Association, Tea Trade Committee and Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food all helped to create the standards, which were developed in 1980 to help professional tea testers and are officially known as BS 6008.

Adding the milk first is supposedly the proper way to make tea, at least when you're brewing a pot. This will be a devastating blow to tea purists, who argue that this method is a cardinal sin when it comes to brewing a proper cup.



So to make a proper brew (according to the BSI)...

You need a pot made of porcelain, and there must be at least two grams of tea to every 100ml of water. The temperature can't go beyond 85 degrees when served but should be above 60 degrees for "optimum flavour and sensation".

The perfect pot size is apparently between 74mm and 78mm wide, and 83mm and 87mm tall. Since the average tea bag contains 1.5g of tea leaves, at least two tea bags should be used for a small pot, and four for a large one.

Timing is important. According to the BSI the perfect brewing time is six minutes (also known as steeping) which extracts the flavours from the tea leaves.

Of course everyone has their favourite method, and the traditional "pour hot water into a mug, chuck the tea bag in and add a splash of milk" never hurt anyone.

Famous quotes about tea

"A cup of tea would restore my normality." - Douglas Adams

"Some people will tell you there is a great deal of poetry and fine sentiment in a chest of tea." – Ralph Waldo Emerson

"I am in no way interested in immortality, but only in the taste of tea." - Lu T'ung

"Where there's tea, there's hope." – Arthur Wing Pinero

"Tea! Bless ordinary everyday afternoon tea!" Agatha Christie.

"The milk-first school can bring forward some fairly strong arguments, but I maintain that my own argument is unanswerable.

"This is that, by putting the tea in first and stirring as one pours, one can exactly regulate the amount of milk whereas one is liable to put in too much milk if one does it the other way round." - George Orwell

