



THE GOLDEN RULES OF TEA STORAGE

HEALTH BENEFITS OF TEA

The results of recent studies by scientists show that all tea may benefit our health in a number of ways:

- Fights cancer causing cells
- Contains protective antioxidants
- Promotes cardiovascular health
- Lowers cholesterol
- Beautifies the skin
- Aids in digestion
- Stimulates and cleans digestive tract
- Alleviates headaches
- Balances blood pressure
- Improves fluid balance
- Reduces the risk of stroke

Tea is high in antioxidants and polyphenols, which may reduce the risk of cancer, inflammation, and stress-related health issues. These features are strongest in tea made from fresh, minimally-processed *Camellia sinensis* leaves. Even the best tea, however, can lose its health benefits if it isn't stored properly.

PROPER STORAGE OF TEA

Fresh loose-leaf tea tastes sweeter, is more aromatic and complex, and is loaded with antioxidants. Tea that is improperly stored will go through chemical changes that will deteriorate the beneficial substances in the tea. Improperly stored tea will also become rancid and stale, which can be harmful to the body. This deterioration can be caused by temperature, moisture and oxygen.

The shelf life of tea that has not been blended with any other ingredients is 18 months. If it is blended with herbs, the shelf life is 12 months. Herbal blends should be stored in the same way as regular tea — tightly sealed in dark containers at room temperature, away from heat and cold. (Note the shelf life of tea bags is 6 months, due to the lower quality of the tea and the bag containing bleach and chlorine.)

THE MAIN FACTORS CAUSING THE DETERIORATION OF TEA ARE:

1. **Light** – Light causes tea to lose freshness, and will also cause oxidization. To keep tea fresh and to avoid oxidation, store it in a dark, airtight container, similar to the black tins or multi-ply resealable bags we have in our shop. Protection from light also prevents unnecessary moisture buildup. *see storage exception to this statement.





2. **Temperature** – Storing tea at room temperature will combat the enemies of freshness. Temperatures between 68/77 degrees Fahrenheit will minimize the risk of your tea losing its plentiful health benefits — and will ensure maximum flavor! Heat above 77F degrees accelerates chemical changes in the tea, so always store tea away from direct heat sources. The best environment for tea is in a dark, cool, dry place away from light, including sunlight and exceedingly low or high temperatures.
3. **Humidity** - Another thief of freshness (and thus nutrients and health benefits) is moisture. Tea kept in a damp environment will become damp itself, and this invites mold, bacterial growth, and cabinet pests.
4. **Oxygen** - Make sure your tea tins and bags are tightly sealed. The more your tea is exposed to air, the more the components of the tea will break down, as well as absorb any surrounding odors. When tightly sealed, pests are also prevented from getting into your tea.
5. **Odor Pollution** – Tea will easily absorb surrounding odors. If not stored properly, odor pollution from other food items stored in the same environment will affect the original scent of the tea leaves, as well as destroy the flavor. Non-blended teas should be stored away from herbal infusion blends, because their aroma is usually very strong, and the non-blended tea will take on the aroma of the herbs.
6. **Store in Bulk** – If an airtight tin is almost empty, the tea will deteriorate faster than in a tin that is completely full. Try to keep your tins full as much as possible. The more tea you keep in the enclosed tin, the less oxygen there will be in that space. This will also make it harder for the tea to absorb odors from the surroundings.

*There are a couple exceptions to storing tea in tins or resealable bags. The first is dark compressed tea, which includes Pu-erh. This is an aged tea, and it needs air to continue the aging process. Dark compressed tea should be kept ventilated in a dry and **odor-free** environment, stored in the breathable paper it came in.

The other tea with special storage requirements is matcha tea. Because it is in a powder form, it is more volatile than other tea. Once the tin is opened, it should be stored inside the refrigerator. (Not on the door where temperatures fluctuate constantly due to opening the door.) Matcha can be stored in the fridge for up to 4 months.

STORAGE CONTAINERS NOT RECOMMENDED FOR TEA

Plastic baggies – The tea will easily take on surrounding odors, as well as be exposed to light. Light will break down the health benefits of the tea as well as cause moisture in the bag.

Glass – The light will oxidize the components of the tea, weakening the aroma and damaging the quality of the tea.

Paper bag – The tea will easily absorb various odors of food in its environment.

Newspaper – The tea will absorb the ink smell of newspapers.

Sources

<https://www.worldteanews.com/issues-trends/report-uk-researchers-evaluate-tea-drinkers-and-health-benefits-black-tea>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6512146/>

