

Brewing Iced Tea with Fresh Mint

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A tall glass of iced tea flavored with fresh mint can be a refreshing source of fluids on a hot day. Research has suggested many possible health benefits from drinking tea, such as helping reduce the risk of heart disease.

There are several methods for making minted iced tea. Here's a quick and fairly foolproof way to enjoy tea within 7 minutes or less — that includes the time you're waiting for it to brew! No special equipment is needed.

IMPORTANT: The following directions are per each 8 ounce cup of tea. Multiply the amounts, based on the amount of tea you wish to make.

For each 8 ounce cup of tea:

1. Heat half the water required to brew the tea to make “double strength” tea. For example: Heat 4 ounces (1/2 cup) of the 8 ounces (1 cup) of water needed to make one cup of tea.

TIP: Follow the directions that came with your tea for the proper water temperature for brewing that particular tea. As a general rule, green teas taste better if brewed at a lower temperature than black teas — add the water for green teas when you see the steam start to rise from the water (or as directed on the package).

2. Pour the heated water over the following two ingredients in a tea kettle or other heatproof container. Stir and cover to steep:
 - o One single-serving tea bag or about one teaspoon of tea leaves (unless the directions with your tea advise otherwise). Use either black or green tea.
 - o One tablespoon of coarsely chopped fresh mint leaves that have been washed before chopping. Spearmint works well — you might experiment with other flavors such as pineapple or orange mint.

3. Steep for the time specified with the directions for your specific tea.

TIP: As a general rule, green teas are steeped for about 3 minutes and black teas from 3 to 5 minutes. Over-steeping makes for a bitter tea.

4. Stir, and then strain the mixture through a fine sieve to remove the mint leaves and tea.

TIP: If desired — to improve the clearness of the tea, strain a second time through a coffee filter.

5. Cool the tea by pouring it over ice in a **metal** bowl, pan or pitcher. Use about a half cup of ice per serving.
6. Pour the cooled tea into tall glasses filled with ice cubes. Or, refrigerate, covered, until ready to serve; then add to ice-filled glasses. Fresh tea tastes best — for best flavor, drink within a few hours of preparation.

TIP: Use ice cubes in the glasses rather than crushed ice to keep melting to a minimum and prevent dilution of the tea. If you feel the tea is too strong, just add more water.

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