

# The Art and Science of the Perfect Brew: How to Prepare a Cup of Tea

## Lesson Overview

In this lesson, learners will explore the cultural history, scientific process, and practical skills required to brew the perfect cup of tea. This lesson transitions from basic kitchen safety to the nuance of flavor extraction, culminating in a hands-on "Tea Sommelier" experience.

## Materials Needed

- Electric kettle or stovetop kettle
- Fresh water
- A variety of tea (tea bags and/or loose-leaf: black, green, and herbal)
- Mugs or teacups
- Teaspoons
- Timer (phone or kitchen timer)
- Optional "Add-ins": Milk, honey, sugar, lemon slices, mint leaves
- Thermometer (optional, for advanced learners)
- "Tea Tasting Journal" (a simple piece of paper or notebook)

## Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the learner will be able to:

- Identify three main types of tea and their ideal steeping times.
- Demonstrate the safe use of heating equipment to boil water.
- Execute the sequential steps of brewing tea (Boil, Steep, Season).
- Describe how "steep time" affects the flavor profile of a beverage.

## The Hook: The "Mystery Scent" Challenge

Before revealing the topic, place three different dry tea bags or small bowls of loose-leaf tea (e.g., Peppermint, Earl Grey, and Green Tea) in front of the learner. Have them close their eyes and smell each one. Ask: *"If you could turn these smells into a warm, cozy drink, which one would you choose? Why do humans all over the world, for thousands of years, have a ritual of soaking leaves in hot water?"*

## I DO: Modeling and Safety (The Teacher/Parent Leads)

**1. Safety First:** Demonstrate how to fill the kettle and explain the dangers of steam and hot surfaces. Show how to turn the kettle on and where the "hot zones" are.

**2. The Science of Extraction:** Explain that tea isn't just "flavored water." It is an *infusion*. Hot water acts as a solvent that pulls antioxidants, caffeine, and flavors out of the leaves.

- **Black Tea:** Needs boiling water (212°F) and 3-5 minutes.
- **Green Tea:** Needs slightly cooler water (175°F) and only 2 minutes (otherwise it gets bitter!).
- **Herbal Tea:** Needs boiling water and can steep for 5+ minutes.

**3. Demonstration:** I will show how to place the tea bag in the mug, pour the water carefully leaving "room for cream," and start the timer immediately.

## WE DO: Guided Practice

Together, we will prepare the "Mise en Place" (everything in its place):

- **Step 1: Water Prep.** The learner fills the kettle with fresh, cold water (fresh water has more oxygen, which makes tea taste better!).
- **Step 2: Selection.** The learner chooses their tea based on the "Scent Challenge" and identifies the correct steeping time based on the guide provided in the "I DO" section.
- **Step 3: Vessel Prep.** We warm the mugs by rinsing them with a little warm tap water so the tea stays hot longer.

## YOU DO: Independent Brewing & Tasting

The learner will now perform the "Perfect Pour":

1. **Brew:** Pour the hot water over the tea bag/infuser.
2. **Monitor:** Set the timer and watch the color change. This is the *diffusion* process.
3. **The "Naked" Taste:** Before adding sugar or milk, take a tiny sip with a spoon. Record one "flavor word" (e.g., earthy, floral, spicy, bitter).
4. **The Customization:** Add chosen enhancements (honey, milk, etc.).
5. **Presentation:** Serve the tea to a "guest" (a family member, a stuffed animal, or the teacher) with a napkin and a spoon.

## Success Criteria

Skill	What Success Looks Like
Safety	Kettle handled carefully; no spills; awareness of steam.
Sequencing	Water boiled first, then steeped for the correct duration.
Sensory Analysis	Can describe the difference in taste before and after adding milk/honey.

## Assessment

**Formative:** During the "We Do" phase, ask the learner: "If we leave this green tea in the water for 10 minutes, what will happen to the taste?" (Answer: It becomes bitter/astringent).

**Summative:** The learner creates a "How-To" infographic or a short video explaining the 3 golden rules of tea making to a beginner.

## Differentiation & Adaptability

- **For Younger Learners (Scaffolding):** Use "Picture Cards" for each step (Water -> Kettle -> Mug -> Timer). Focus heavily on heat safety.
- **For Advanced Learners (Extension):** Conduct a "Steep Time Experiment." Brew three cups of the same tea at 2 minutes, 5 minutes, and 10 minutes. Compare the color and bitterness levels. Research the "Boston Tea Party" for a history connection.
- **For Workplace/Training Context:** Focus on the "Social Etiquette" and hospitality aspect—how to offer and serve tea to a client or colleague.

## Conclusion & Recap

**Summary:** Today we learned that tea is more than a drink; it is a chemical process and a practiced skill. We learned that time and temperature are the two most important variables in a good brew.

**Reflection:** Ask the learner: *"What was the most surprising thing you learned about such a simple drink? How does the flavor change when you change just one ingredient?"*