

## **Perfect Tea from the BBC**

### **Warming the pot**

Fill the kettle with fresh water. Water that has been boiled before will have lost some of its dissolved oxygen, vital for tea brewing. Soft water – water with a low mineral content – causes less scum to develop on the surface of the finished tea.

Warm the teapot by pouring in a quarter of a cup of water and putting the pot in a microwave for one minute on full power.

### **The pot calling the kettle**

Synchronise. Bring the warmed pot straight to the just-boiled kettle and place a single heaped teaspoon of loose Assam leaves into the pot.

Pour in the boiling water immediately. If the water is allowed to cool, it is less effective in releasing the chemicals in the tea leaves. The use of a tea cosy is not recommended, since the liquid needs to cool before pouring.

### **Stir it up**

Stir the brewing tea and leave it for three minutes. This time allows for the release of polyphenolic compounds, which will give the tea its rich colour and flavour. A longer infusion period will unlock high molecular weight chemicals which taste bitter.

You cannot reduce the amount of caffeine in your cuppa by shortening the infusion time, most of the stimulant is released within a minute.

### **Milky milky**

Put chilled milk in your ceramic mug **FIRST**. Milk proteins degenerate and taste stale if they are heated above 75 degrees centigrade. The milk first method allows the chilled liquid to cool the hot tea, rather than vice versa.

Sugar can then be added to taste. Both milk and sugar reduce the natural astringency [bitterness] of tea.

### **Bottom down and bottoms up**

The finished tea should be a "rich, attractive colour" and be somewhere in the region of 65 degrees centigrade – any hotter and scientists warn that "vulgar slurping" might be required.

Dr Andrew Stapley says: "For best results carry a heavy bag of shopping – or walk the dog – in cold, driving rain for at least half an hour beforehand. This will make the tea taste out of this world."