

When Should Tea Drinkers Add the Milk?

How to make the perfect cup of tea has always been debated. One of the biggest arguments involves when to add the milk. Should tea drinkers add the milk before or after the tea? Usually, milk only is added to [black teas](#).

Although most Americans add the milk after the tea, tea drinkers in other countries argue over the fact.

Author George Orwell, enthusiastic tea drinker, advocated putting tea in first and then adding milk. In a famous 1946 essay in the Evening Standard, Orwell wrote "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."

Scientists have even joined the debate. The British Royal Society of Chemistry came out with a formula for making the perfect cup of tea. The Royal Society of Chemists advised putting the milk in the cup before the tea. Milk should be added before the tea because degradation of milk proteins occurs when milk is added to very hot water.

But the physicists disagreed with the chemists. The British Institute of Physics say the most important factor is the water temperature and not the milk.

Historically, milk was put in first to prevent cups from breaking. Only the rich could afford porcelain and everyone else used cheap china. Porcelain could withstand the heat of tea being poured directly in the cup. Inexpensive china often broke when the tea was poured directly in the cup. Adding milk first tempered the tea and prevented the cups from breaking.

Adding milk may reduce one of teas health benefits. Several recent studies show tea aids in protecting against cardiovascular disease. However, a new study from Germany shows this benefit may be reduced when milk is added to tea.

Reported in the European Heart Journal, the study tracked women with an average age of 59. When participants drank 2 cup of black tea without milk, they experienced an increase in cardiovascular function.

When the group drank tea with milk, they had no more increase in FMV than if they consumed 2 cups of hot water. A possible reasons is several of the proteins in milk may join with flavonoids in tea to form complexes which nullify cardiovascular benefits. This is a small, preliminary study and findings must be confirmed by larger studies.

About the Author

Paul Gerst is the founder of [teadog.com](#). An Internet retailer,

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