

# Brewing Techniques

- [Gongfu Cha \(Tea\) Basics](#)
- [Why Measure the Quantity of Tea to Use](#)
- [Water Recipes](#)

# Gongfu Cha (Tea) Basics



Please keep in mind that Gongfu is a very wide-spread practice and will be adapted to the tastes of the person making the tea. Alternatively said, there are many techniques and many methods for preparing tea. Some people may believe there is an even more basic/traditional/easier/etc way to do gongfu, and the Tea Tavern has no way to prove them nor us wrong or right. As a result, the following is writing based on what the Tea Tavern currently believes. If you have an interest in going down that research rabbit hole, email [quests \(a\) tea-tavern.com](mailto:quests@tea-tavern.com), where our quest givers may be able to provide extra resources in hopes of you sharing the information that you learn with us, after finding it. (^-^)

## Basic Tea Tavern Gongfu Cha

# Tooling

Gongfu Cha uses the following materials, which can be seen in the image above. The items in the image come in the [Adventurer's Brewing Kit](#) on tea-tavern.com.

General tea preparation tools, such as a kettle for hot water, are still used, but these items are different than what is often seen in other culture's brewing methods.

## Gaiwan

One of the most traditional and useful methods of brewing tea is in a gaiwan (porcelain cup and lid, to the left of the glass cup). It has a rimmed bottom, an outward curved lip, and a lid with it's own rimmed handle. This is the container that tea leaves are brewed.

## Gong Dao Bei (Justice cup) / Furnace / Serving cup

When one finishes brewing, the tea from the gaiwan is poured into the justice cup (Glass cup with a lip for pouring on the right). This assures "justice" in that everyone will be given the same strength brew of tea, rather than the first person served receiving the weakest brew, and the last person receiving the strongest brew.

## Tea cup / Tasting cup

The tea cup (front three cups) is the cup that receives some of the brewed tea from the justice cup and is used for drinking the tea. The size is usually smaller than the gaiwan and justice cup, as they will each be given equal amounts of tea from the Justice cup. As a result, everyone drinking tea prepared by gongfu will need a cup.

# Prepare for Tea!

Materials can be prepared before beginning anything more time sensitive.

- Gongfu-specific Supplies
  - Gaiwan
  - Justice Cup
  - Tea cups
- Water
  - Most kettles fill to around 1-2 liters or 4-8 cups, depending on what unit of measurement the kettle uses.
  - Use purified (distilled, reverse osmosis, etc.) water, and add either...
    - 1 or 2 milliliters of A&B [Original](#) minerals to remineralize the water, making the perfect water for tea
    - Or a minor pinch of salt

- There are a lot of reasons for this, and if you'd like more information on this topic, our brewing component supplier [TeaCurious](#) has a lot of information on this topic.
- Tea
  - Measure out 5g (5 grams) of tea, and add it to your gaiwan

## Why Measure the Quantity of Tea?



n, and [Oolong](#) teas. How



These are dry leaves, that were processed very differently (See other chapters for an explanation of the different possible forms of processing). The cups are the same, yet the leaves each take up a different volume. So visually, we can't accurately know how much mass we are putting in, unless we already know the particular tea.

Now, what if you were to hold it by hand? 5g is pretty light, so do you think you could distinguish mass between 3g, 5g, and 8g?

QUEST: Get research on how object size alters the perception of mass and a study on how much mass people can distinguish between.

The following are the exact same as their corresponding tea above, but measured on a scale (The white tea didn't fit on the tea plate, so was taken out of and put back into the cup)





The scale as a variance of approximately  $\pm 0.2$  grams.

They were all the same amount of tea, but due to their vastly different sizes. As a result of this difference, the Tea Tavern would rather measure how much tea is used when brewing.

## Prepare the Tea

PLEASE READ THIS ALL OF THIS SECTION BEFORE STARTING. We are using boiling water, here!

We are also skipping many technique specifics, using a technique that may not be ~perfect~ for every tea, but works for most; The focus is a good, general explanation, showing the safest options for someone new. At a later time, more techniques will be written about on different pages.

That being said, the basic steps will be as follows:

1. Add water to the gaiwan and put the lid on top once done. When filling, try to fill it to where the gaiwan starts to curve out, where the lid would still seal on top of the water, or below either the above points.
2. Wait a few seconds, 2-10 seconds for most tea
3. Understand that nobody cast the "modify memory" spell. 2-10 SECONDS for steeping, so I hope you read this all ahead of time, because you probably should be pouring by now. (To be honest for most teas, it isn't the end of the world if you go over; it just becomes strong to most people. You might like stronger teas, though. Learn and brew to your preference.)
4. Lift the gaiwan with both hands.
  1. Put your thumbs **on**, not *in*, the lid's rim.
  2. Use your fingers to lift from the bottom of the gaiwan, and like the top, put your fingers **on**, not *inside*, the gaiwan's bottom rim.
  3. Reason: The gaiwan gets hot. These rims help prevent the user from getting burned. This is also why NOT hold the inside of the rims. They are also closer to the water, and will get hot fast by comparison to the rims.
5. Over the justice cup, tilt the gaiwan's top towards yourself and the bottom away from yourself. The brewed tea will start to come out, and should stream into the justice cup. If nothing comes out, return the gaiwan to a normal standing position and adjust the lid slightly to make sure there is not a water-tight seal between the lid and cup. Then try again.

After all this, the brewed tea should be in the cup, ready for serving.

## Serve the Tea

Pour equal amounts of tea from the justice cup into the tea cups for as many people as are having tea.

When ready for more tea, repeat the "Prepare the Tea" practice, as some Tea Tavern leaves can be re-steeped over 10 times and still have a good amount of flavor. It is worth noting that the more steepings completed, the longer the steeping might have to go for to get a satisfactory flavor. And over all those brewing, people can talk, share stories, laugh, and live merry over a fresh brew (of tea). ;D

But maybe you aren't using Tea Tavern leaves. Well, we accept that others also have nice teas, and one easy way of telling if a vendor sells high quality tea is by tasting the later steepings from gongfu cha. If the tea tastes good all the way through every steep, it is probably a pretty good quality tea. If it becomes a straight bitter, or an otherwise *weird* flavor that people find unpleasant, it is likely *not* a good quality tea.





# Why Measure the Quantity of Tea to Use



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# Water Recipes

## How To Make Tea Curious Water

### Materials & Tools You'll Need

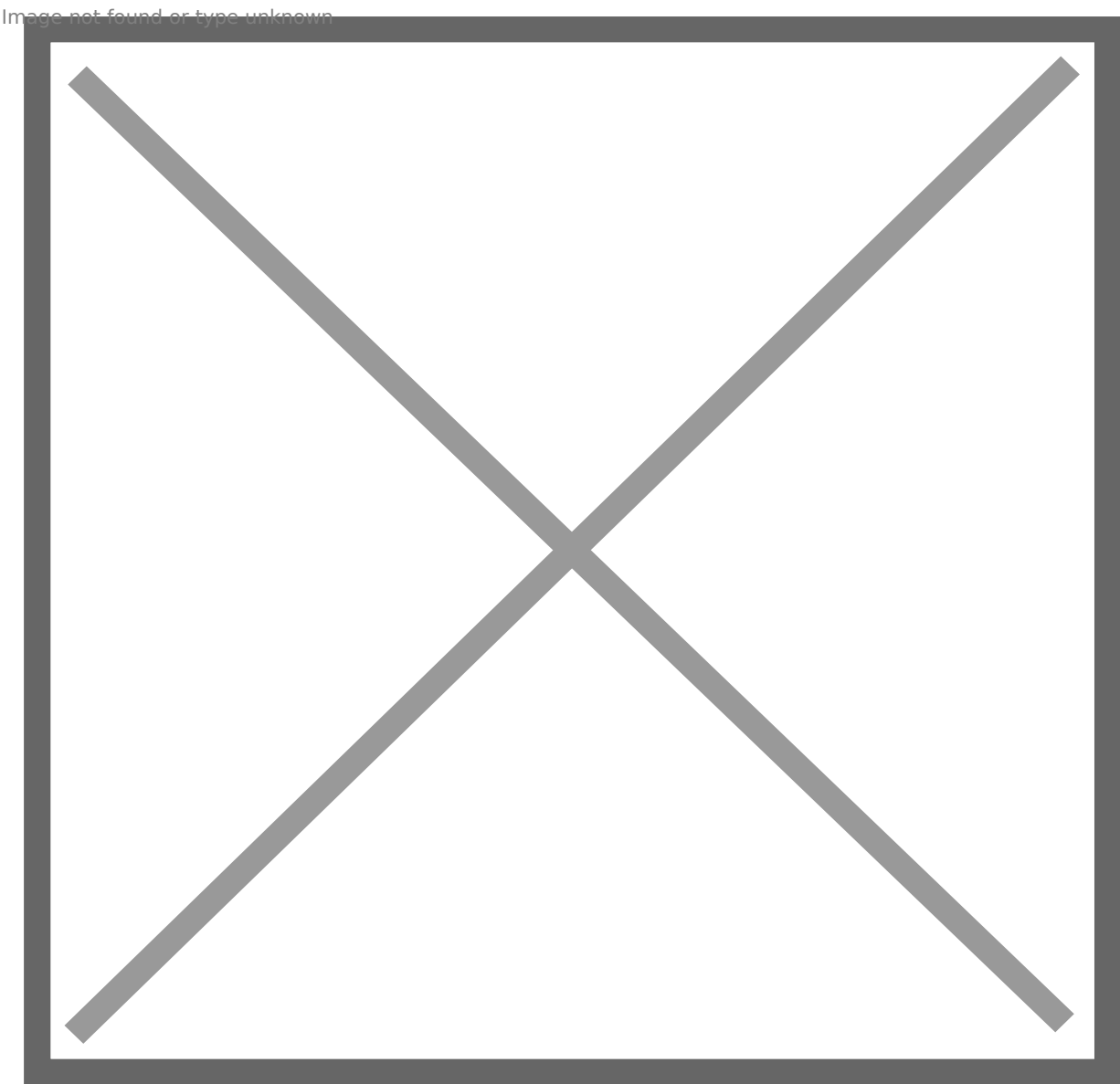
- **Base water** — either purified, reverse osmosis, or distilled water, which are all waters that have had the minerals removed from them through various methods. They serve as a blank slate for us to build our mineral profile on top of. These waters can often be found at the grocery store, at refill stations, or at specialty water stores.
  - Can also be made at home if you have a RO filter that ***does not automatically re-mineralize the water***.
  - Can also be made at home with a Zero Water pitcher, but note that your mileage may vary: if your tap water is already very hard you will blow through the Zero Water pitcher very quickly, but some people have had success using this.
- **Minerals** — linked below are the same food-grade minerals we use for our own water and products, and while they may sound a little intimidating at first if this is your first time handling these mineral salts, these are all commonly used in food applications and are the same minerals found in all natural mineral waters.
  - [Calcium chloride](#), chemical composition **CaCl<sub>2</sub>**.
  - [Sodium bicarbonate](#), chemical composition **NaHCO<sub>3</sub>**
  - [Magnesium sulfate](#), chemical composition **MgSO<sub>4</sub> \* 7H<sub>2</sub>O**
  - [Potassium bicarbonate](#), chemical composition **KHCO<sub>3</sub>**
- **Tools:**
  - [Weighing Scale accurate to 0.001g](#), recommended to weigh out precise amounts of minerals
  - [TDS Meter](#) — this is the one we use and now offer since it works *and* is super stylish. But any other one should work fine.
  - Container for the water (standard 5 gallon/18.9 liter container), for water refills & to store water in

Your total starting investment into these tools will run around 60 USD, but this will then allow you to make your own mineral water at around \$0.10/liter or less, a pretty vast improvement from buying bottled mineral water from the store. You can also opt to [pick up pre-made options from the Tea Curious Water store](#) if you prefer — an option we made available after we realized not everyone wanted to formulate entirely from scratch. Pick what suits you best!

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# Making Your First Batch

To make Tea Curious water, start by measuring out the appropriate amounts of each mineral for the amount of water you need, based on the following chart:



For example, **for 5 gallons (18.9 liters) of water**, weigh out:

- 0.226 grams of potassium bicarbonate
- 0.34 grams of calcium chloride
- 0.472 grams of magnesium sulfate
- 0.34 grams of sodium bicarbonate
  - *If using sodium carbonate (v.1.0): 0.226 grams*
- Mix with the water! Allow 5-10 minutes to completely dissolve, if needed.

You can stop here and have a perfectly great water for tea -- seriously!

However, there's one more component that, while a little more tricky to get, is just the cherry on top on this already-awesome water, and that's **amorphous silica**. I especially recommend it if you're a bit of a texture & aftertaste junkie like we are with our teas.

Refer to the table above for silica/silicon dioxide measurements. For example, for a 5 gallon / 18.9 liter container:

- 0.189 grams of amorphous, food grade silicon dioxide
- (Optional) **Non-crystalline**, amorphous silica (**do not use crystalline silica!**)
- Mix with the water, together with the other ingredients! Allow 5-10 minutes to completely dissolve, if needed.

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Originating and additional information from our partners at Tea Curious:

<https://www.teacurious.com/water-recipe>

Archived version:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20240924233032/https://www.teacurious.com/water-recipe/>

On how to use water for tea: <https://www.teacurious.com/how-to-use-water-to-influence-tea-flavor>

Archived version: <https://web.archive.org/web/20241216030525/https://www.teacurious.com/how-to-use-water-to-influence-tea-flavor>