

chai

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Rulebook



*In **Chai**, you will step into the shoes of a tea merchant, combining tea flavours to make a perfect blend.*

Specializing in either rooibos, green, oolong, black, or white tea, you will buy and collect ingredients to fulfill your customers' orders.

Add money to completed card points to determine the best tea merchant!

Game Setup



1. Each tea merchant (player) selects a **TEA HOUSE (A)** matching their tea type (green, black, rooibos, oolong, or white). Players receive 6 base **TEA TOKENS (B)** of their colour and place them beside or on the tea sack in their tea house. All other tea tokens and tea houses are returned to the box.
2. Each player is given 8 customer cards that match their tea colour. Players deal themselves one starting customer, placing them face-up beside their tea house. A second card is placed in the middle of the playing area, creating the **CUSTOMER POOL (C)**. Distribute player aid cards if desired.
3. The remaining 6 customer cards from each player are shuffled together. Two customer cards from this deck are also dealt face-up and added to the customer pool. The remaining **CUSTOMER DECK (D)** is placed face-down beside the pool. For example, in a 3-player game there are 5 (3+2) cards in the customer pool, and in a 5-player game there are 7 (5+2) face-up cards.
4. Fill the **TEA FLAVOUR BAG (E)** with the 72 tea flavour tiles, drawing tiles one at a time to fill each row of the market board from left-to-right.
5. Place 1 of each type of pantry token (honey, milk, sugar, vanilla, and chai spices) on the **PANTRY BOARD (F)**. Place the 45 remaining tokens in the pantry bag beside the board.

6. Shuffle the 8 ability cards and place the deck face-down beside the customer pool. Deal 3 cards face-up to form the **ABILITY CARDS (G)** area.
7. Place **TEACUPS (H)** equal to the number of players in a row on top of the playing area.
8. Shuffle the 6 **TIP TOKENS (I)** and place one face-down in front of each tea cup. Place the remaining tips (1 or more) off to the side of the playing area.
9. Place the **THERMOMETER (J)** beside the tea cups with the round-tracker clip set to 0°C.
10. *The last person to drink tea is the starting player, with play continuing clockwise. The first player receives a copper coin as a starting bonus; all other players receive a silver coin. Remaining coins are placed on the **MONEY POUCH BOARD (K)**.*

Gameplay

The game is played over 5 rounds, with the thermometer used as a round marker starting at 0°C. A round is complete when all teacups are filled with one order that round, which may require multiple turns. In a turn, a player chooses one of the following 3 actions before optionally fulfilling an order:

- 1** Visit the Market **2** Visit the Pantry or **3** Reserve Customer & Use Ability.

1

VISIT THE MARKET

mint



jasmine



lemon



ginger



berries



lavender



Tea flavour tiles are needed to complete most orders. A player cannot have more than 12 flavour tiles in their tea house at any time and must **immediately** discard tiles of their choice down to 12 if they exceed this limit.

- To purchase tea flavours, the player states their intention to **VISIT THE MARKET** and immediately receives a gold coin, representing money they've earned that day selling tea to market merchants.
- A minimum of a copper coin must be spent on the market board, but there is no limit to the number of tiles purchased.
- The player selects a tea flavour tile and adds it to their tea house. If the flavour tile is touching tiles of the same type (horizontally/vertically, but not diagonally), these tiles are also taken. The player pays the most expensive amount listed at the top of the column from which the tiles were taken. The money is placed on the money pouch board.
- After each purchase, slide the remaining flavour tiles to the left.
- At the end of their turn, the player refills the empty squares on the market board while the next player begins their own turn. Tiles are placed one at a time, starting in the top row and moving left-to-right. If the tea flavour bag is empty, remove all tea flavour tiles from tea cups and refill the bag before redrawing.



EXAMPLE: The two lemon tiles can be bought for a silver coin, and the three berries are a gold coin. Buying the lavender for a copper coin allows the player to buy the two jasmines for a silver coin, or the two gingers for a gold coin, as they will be adjacent after the bottom row slides to the left.

3

2

VISIT THE PANTRY

PANTRY items (milk, sugar, honey, vanilla, and chai spices) are also needed to complete most orders. A player selects **three items** from the five face-up pantry items, or blindly draws from the pantry bag. The player may choose a combination of face-up and blind draws.

- Before selecting items, a player may reset the pantry board one time for a copper coin. The face-up pantry tokens are placed in the bag before drawing new ones.
- Players cannot have more than 6 pantry items in their tea house, but they may choose which items to discard down to 6.
- Empty token spaces on the additive board are repopulated after the player's turn.



3

RESERVE & USE ABILITY

Players may also **RESERVE A CUSTOMER** into their tea house from the visible customer pool or blindly reserve from the customer deck. If reserving a visible customer, a new customer is immediately drawn face-up into the customer pool. Players cannot have more than 3 unfulfilled customer orders in their tea house at any time.

After reserving a customer, the player may choose to use **one** of the three face-up **ABILITY CARDS**:



1. Make a copper coin or silver coin purchase for free in the market.



5. The player chooses a flavour tile type in the market to be immediately reset.



2. Sell a flavour tile for a silver coin.



6. The player may fulfill a customer order this turn with one fewer pantry item.



3. When drawn, place 3 flavour tiles from the tea flavour bag on this card. When using, the player swaps tiles on this card with tea house tiles.



7. The player may swap up to two pantry items in their tea house for new face-up pantry board items.



4. When fulfilling a customer order this turn, the player receives a gold coin tip.



8. The player may take one pantry item from the pantry board for free.



At the start of each new round (rounds 2-5), the player next to start draws a new ability card and replaces one of the three in-play ability cards before starting their turn. For ease of play, place the new ability card on top of the replaced card.

EXAMPLE: A player reserves a black tea customer card and places the card beside their tea house, for a total of two customers. Using ability card #1, they buy two mints and fulfill a customer pool card.

4

FULFILL ORDER

At the end of a player's turn, they may **FULFILL ONE ORDER** from either the customer pool or the player's personal tea house. Customer cards come in different colours that match player tea houses.

- Ingredients (tea flavour tiles and pantry items) shown on the customer card are placed in a single tea cup with an unrevealed tip token.
- Players **must** also place a base tea token matching the customer card's colour in the cup. If the player does not have the same tea type as customer's order, the player must pay another player a copper  coin to purchase the token. The merchant seller cannot refuse the sale.
- After successfully fulfilling the order, the player flips over the tip  token underneath and collects money equal to the tip from the money pouch board. If the order was from the customer pool, a new card is drawn from the deck and added to the pool.
- A customer's order cannot be fulfilled without the base tea token. If there are no more base tea tokens of a particular colour, the customers in the pool and tea houses matching that type of tea are immediately removed from the game.
- The fulfilled customer card is placed face-down beside the player's tea house, ending the player's turn.



There are 5 rounds in the game. When a player flips over the last tip token, the current round is over, and the round-tracker clip is advanced one space on the thermometer (0°C, 25°C, 50°C, 75°C, and 100°C). **Take a break and drink some tea!**



The number of tips & cups equals the number of players

Start the next round by shuffling the tip tokens and placing one beside each tea cup. The **next clockwise** player from the one who ended the last round adds a new ability card before starting their turn.

Game End

The **GAME ENDS** when 5 rounds have been completed. For example, in a 5-player game, 25 fulfilled customers triggers game end. When the final customer order is fulfilled, each of the other players completes their last turn so that each player has played the same number of turns. Customer orders can still be fulfilled but no tips will be given.

To begin scoring, players add up their victory points from **fulfilled customer orders** and add any **remaining money** to this total.

- In **3-5 player games**, the *diversi-tea award* is presented. Each player counts the number of different base tea colours from their fulfilled orders and adds this number to their score.
- Unfulfilled customer orders do not count negatively, and no points are awarded for leftover ingredients as they spoil.

The player with the most victory points wins the game as the best tea merchant! In the case of a tie, the person with the fewest fulfilled customer cards wins. If the game is still tied, the person with the most money wins. If that does not break the tie, the victory is shared.

Variants

ORGANIC

For a simplified version of *Chai*, especially for children, remove ability cards from the game.

CONNOISSEUR


Instead of placing a player's customer cards face-up by their tea house, cards are hidden.



At the end of the game, **1 point** is awarded per tea cup to the player who has the most tea tokens of their colour. Ties are friendly.

Deduct 1 point for each unfulfilled card in a player's tea house.

Solo Rules

STEEPEDGAMES.COM/CHAI is the authori-tea for all rulebook questions and translations!


As a tea merchant, you will start with an inheritance of a gold  coin to continue your family's legacy.

- The solo game plays in 10 turns, with the same setup for a 2-player game.
- Set the thermometer to the lowest step. Raise the marker 1 step at the end of each turn.
- As usual, a new ability card is added when the last tip  is revealed.
- When you fulfill a customer that requires a base tea token from the other tea merchant, pay a  copper to the bank.
- After 10 turns, grade your final score according to the table to the right.

GRADE	Points
SOMMELIER	60+
MASTER	50-59
APPRENTICE	40-49
TEA TASTER	0-39

Co-op Rules

Local tea merchants face off against the town's finest chaiwala!

- Select a type of tea for the chaiwala, with the same setup for each human player.
- When fulfilling customers, a tea token is still required but players do not have to pay a copper  coin.



- The chaiwala will always fulfill the lowest victory point card in the customer pool without any payment for solo play, and fulfill the highest card for 2-3 players.
- When playing co-op with 2-3 players, combine your scores to defeat the chaiwala. The more players there are, the easier it is to win.

Credits

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