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Organic White Peony Tea steeping instructions from Intelligentsia Tea Traders

Use fresh tap water, preferably filtered to remove chlorine. Bottled waters labeled "spring water" work best. Distilled, mineral, or water labeled as "drinking water" should be avoided as they tend to have too much or too little mineral content to produce an ideal cup. In general, softer water requires a shorter steeping time and harder water requires a longer steeping time.

White teas steep best when heat dissipates throughout the steeping process. (This is referred to as allowing the tea "to breathe.") To obtain the best results from white tea, use a small (12oz or less) teapot made of ceramic or glass, preferably with a strainer built into the spout. Small pots prevent stewing or over-extraction since they contain a smaller amount of water that can cool more quickly.

White teas tend to steep best using water cooler than boiling, with 170-180°F water as ideal. Boiling water will over-extract the tea producing a bitter, astringent cup. A quick way to cool the water is to pour it into the empty teapot. Then pour the water into a cup(s). Using the cool teapot and cups should cool the water to an appropriate temperature. If not, wait a minute or two, before adding the leaves and water to the pot.

To fully appreciate the delicate body and light flavor of white teas, use lots of leaf, ideally 1-2 tablespoons or 3-4 grams for 6-8 oz of water. For a stronger cup, use more tea and reduce the steeping time slightly. Using the proper amount of leaves should allow for a second, and possibly third, steeping (reusing the leaves for a second or third pot). Be certain to pour out all of the first infusion so that the water doesn't continue to steep the leaves beyond the specified time.

Steep the tea for 2-3 minutes. The quality and composition of the water dramatically affects the steeping time so you should experiment to find a time that suits your palate. For a second infusion, steep for 15-30 seconds.