

Chinese Wedding Tea Ceremony Guide

■■ · Order · Etiquette · Scripts · Roles

Free 5-page sample

This is a preview of the complete 40-page guide (\$9).

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1. Why the tea ceremony matters

In Chinese tradition, tea symbolizes purity, stability, and fertility. Serving tea to parents and elders is the couple's way of expressing gratitude and respect — and in return, the elders accept them into the family and give their blessing, often with red envelopes (■) and jewelry.

Most wedding days include two ceremonies: one at the groom's family home and one at the bride's family home. In many modern weddings, both happen at the same venue — sometimes as a single combined ceremony — which is perfectly fine.

The tea ceremony is not religious. It works for Buddhist, Taoist, Christian, and secular families alike — one reason it has survived so strongly in Singapore, Malaysia, and other overseas Chinese communities.

2. What you need to prepare

Tea set

A teapot and two cups (with saucers) on a red tray, ideally with double-happiness (囍) symbols.

Tea

Oolong, pu-erh, jasmine, or sweet longan-and-red-date tea (桂圆红枣茶), popular in southern China and Southeast Asia.

Cushions

For kneeling, if you choose the traditional posture.

Red envelopes & towel

Elders hand over 红包; a small towel lets them wipe the cups between servings.

Someone to pour

A trusted relative or ceremony assistant who refills the pot and keeps the flow smooth.

Tip: have two identical cups per side plus a spare pair. Ceremonies move fast.

3. The order of service

It varies by family — and your family's version is correct. The most common pattern:

1. Grandparents first (most senior)
2. Parents next
3. Then uncles and aunts in seniority order
4. Siblings or cousins last (in some families)

4. Wedding checklist excerpt

- Agree on the serving order with both families
- Order or borrow the tea set and red tray
- Prepare tea, cushions, red envelopes, and a towel
- Assign the ceremony assistant
- Brief both families on the order and key phrases
- Rehearse once before the day

5. Sample bilingual script

SERVING TEA

"Dad, please drink tea."



SERVING TEA

"Mom, please drink tea."



THANKS

"Thank you for welcoming me into the family."



BLESSING

"May you have a long and happy marriage."



The complete 40-page guide includes every script with phonetics, family roles, red envelope context, and modern adaptations.

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