1. **Identification.**
   
   A. CLDR short name: teapot  
   B. CLDR keywords: drink | tea | teapot | pot

2. **Images.**

   The above images, created by the authors, are certified as having an appropriate license for use by the Unicode Consortium, having been placed into the public domain.

3. **Sort location.**

   A. Category: drink  
   B. after U+1F375 TEACUP WITHOUT HANDLE.

4. **Reference Emoji.** drink — tumbler glass; food — melon is also used out of concern that the quoted phrase “tumbler glass” may not give representative search result counts.
5. Selection factors — Inclusion.

A. Compatibility. Are these needed for compatibility with high-use emoji in popular existing systems, such as Snapchat, Twitter, or QQ? n/a

B. Expected usage level

1. Frequency. Is there a high expected frequency of use?

For comparison, the term “tumbler glass” is used as a comparable emoji in the same category (drink). Data for “melon” is also provided out of concern that the quoted phrase “tumbler glass” may not provide representative query results.

The following results indicate that, generally speaking, “teapot” is considerably more popular than “tumbler glass” in search results, it is about half as popular as “melon”. However, “teapot” is generally as popular (if not more popular) than both in search queries, with a particularly strong predominance over “tumbler glass” in queries requesting a visual result, as can be seen in the Google Image and YouTube search trends.
Youtube Search (as of February 28, 2019)

Google

- Site:youtube.com "tumbler glass" "drink"
  - About 114 results (0.25 seconds)

Google

- Site:youtube.com "teapot" "drink"
  - About 4,510 results (0.47 seconds)

Google

- Site:youtube.com "melon" "food"
  - About 132,000 results (0.82 seconds)

Google Trends (web search)

- Teapot
  - Topic
- Tumbler
  - Glass
- Muskmelon
  - Melon

Worldwide 1/1/04 - 2/28/19 All categories Web Search

Interest over time

[Graph showing trends over time]
Google Trends (image search)

[Google Trends interface with graph]

Google Trends (Youtube search)

[Google Trends interface with graph]
A strong regionality of the popularity of “teapot” can be observed by comparing the Google Trends pattern of “teapot” vs. “tumbler” in search queries in the United States (where there is no strong tea culture) to the United Kingdom and Australia (where there is a stronger tea culture).

In the United States, the concept of “tumbler” passes that of “teapot” around 2012, such that “tumbler” becomes approximately twice as popular a search term by October 2018, while the United Kingdom and Australia show a similar growth of interest in “tumbler”, but “teapot” remains twice as popular by October 2018.
Muskmelon (suggested as a proxy topic for the term “melon”) is also highly regional, with non-English-speaking cultures such as Hong Kong and France (this page), and Taiwan and Japan (next page) favoring it heavily over both “teapot” and “tumbler,” perhaps due to the lack of ambiguity in the local words for “melon” (unlike in English). However, “teapot” remains more popular than “tumbler” in these areas as well.
2. Multiple usages. *Does the candidate emoji have notable metaphorical references or symbolism?*

Yes. It is anticipated that TEAPOT will be used to refer to tea, tisanes (such as rooibos), and their preparation in general, especially in European cultures that are not as familiar with the form of teacup depicted in U+1F375 TEACUP WITHOUT HANDLE. For example, a teapot may be used to indicate directly that someone is preparing or drinking tea.

In addition, as “pot” is a homograph for the English slang term for marijuana, it is possible that a teapot emoji may be used as a discreet reference to it. U+1F341 MAPLE LEAF already sees some use in this role as an implicit reference to the shape of the marijuana leaf,¹ so it is not certain that TEAPOT will also see such use.

The teapot has also been used in a number of other niche contexts, including:

- *Russell's teapot* — an analogy offered by Bertrand Russell in an unpublished 1952 article regarding his belief in a god.² The analogy compares arguments in favor of the existence of a god to those about an effectively unobservable (and therefore un-disprovable) teapot orbiting the Sun between Earth and Mars. As such, TEAPOT may see modest use in secularist and philosophical circles.³ ⁴
- *Starwatching* — The constellation of Sagittarius contains an asterism (a pattern of stars not otherwise grouped as a constellation) known as “The Teapot.”⁵
- *“tempest in a teapot”* — an American English idiom indicating an expression of anger that is out of proportion to a trivial cause.⁶ ⁷

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3. **Use in sequences. Can the candidate be used in sequences?**

Yes. Some tea drinkers may use TEAPOT followed by U+1F4A8 DASH SYMBOL to indicate that a kettle is boiling or that tea is ready for drinking, especially if the emoji is depicted with the spout to the right, as U+1F4A8 may be interpreted as the steam rising from the spout of a boiling tea kettle (see section 7, below, for more details).

In addition, in accordance with the American English idiom discussed above, TEAPOT may follow U+1F329 CLOUD WITH LIGHTNING or U+26C8 THUNDER CLOUD AND RAIN to indicate “tempest in a teapot”.

4. **Breaking new ground. Does the character represent something that is new and different?**

Yes. Unlike U+2615 HOT BEVERAGE and U+1F375 TEACUP WITHOUT HANDLE, TEAPOT proposes the vessel in which tea is brewed, not the vessel from which it is consumed (although early teapots were used in this manner).

More generally, no emoji in the drink category represents such a preparation vessel; with the notable exceptions of U+1F376 SAKE BOTTLE AND CUP, U+1F37E BOTTLE WITH POPPING CORK, and the recently-added U+1F9CA “ice cube”, most represent the vessel from which a drink is consumed.

Therefore, TEAPOT would be the first emoji in the drink category that, like U+1F373 COOKING or U+1F958 SHALLOW PAN OF FOOD, represents the process of preparing food and drink (in this case, tea and other tisanes).

C. **Image distinctiveness. Is there a clearly recognizable image of a physical object that could serve as a paradigm, one that would be distinct enough from other existing emoji?**

Yes. TEAPOT is itself a physical object that is distinct from other kinds of porcelain objects (most notably U+2615 HOT BEVERAGE, which is generally depicted as a ceramic cup, and therefore shares a similarly shaped handle). The teapot is visually distinctive, thanks to its armlike spout and the enclosure of its contents with a lid.

The teapot does look like the functionally related kettle, for which more information is provided at the end of the document. No representations of a kettle have been explicitly encoded in Unicode as of Unicode 11.0/Emoji 11.0, so it is not anticipated that this would impact the distinctiveness of TEAPOT at this time.

D. **Completeness. Does the proposed pictograph fill a gap in existing types of emoji?**

No. However, TEAPOT complements the existing drink emoji by providing an additional unambiguous symbol for tea (unlike U+2615 HOT BEVERAGE, which is explicitly ambiguous) that has broader cultural applicability than U+1F375 TEACUP WITHOUT HANDLE (as not all cultures use a handle-less teacup).

E. **Frequently requested. Is it often requested of the Unicode Consortium, or of Unicode member companies?** n/a

F. Overly specific. Is the proposed character overly specific?

No. We propose a single emoji for teapot without any explicit constraint on visual design. While teapots may be made of many different materials (most notably metal or porcelain), we do not imply that any specific material is intended. We also do not intend to imply any specific teapot design. While the provided image depicts a traditional teapot with a handle placed opposite the spout, this proposal is intended to conceptually include the Japanese yokode kyūsu (横手急須) with a side-handle.

G. Open-ended. Is it just one of many, with no special reason to favor it over others of that type?

No. The teapot is distinctive relative to other kinds of drinkware. Its only close visual relative is the kettle, discussed in section 7, “Other information”.

H. Already representable. Can the concept be represented by another emoji or sequence, even if the image is not exactly the same?

No. No emoji depicting a teapot exists at this time. As noted above in section 5.D, “Completeness,” the general concept of tea as a beverage may be ambiguously represented with U+2615 HOT BEVERAGE, or explicitly with U+1F375 TEACUP WITHOUT HANDLE, but the usefulness of these two emoji for this purpose is limited by their ambiguity of meaning (in the case of U+2615) or cultural specificity (U+1F375).

I. Logos, brands, UI icons, signage, specific people, specific buildings, deities. Are the images unsuitable for encoding as characters?

No. TEAPOT does not explicitly represent any logo, brand, icon, sign, person, building, or deity. Some corporate logos have, however, incorporated the teapot into their branding, including the Japanese tea brand Ayataka and the American tea brand The Republic of Tea.

J. Transient. Is the expected level of usage likely to continue into the future, or would it just be a fad?

No. Teapots have existed since at least the 12th century in China and have been made in Europe since the late 17th century. The continued use of tea in these cultures has allowed the teapot to remain a symbol of tea drinking to the present day. It is not expected that the teapot will lose its meaning or usefulness any time in the near future.

K. Faulty comparison. Are proposals being justified primarily by being similar to (or more important than) existing compatibility emoji?

No. The teapot is not currently represented in the current emoji set and is not similar to existing compatibility emoji.
L. Exact Images. *Does the proposal request an exact image?*

No. No exact image of a teapot is being requested.

M. Region Flags Without Code. n/a

7. **Other information.**

*Distinguishing Teapots and Tea Kettles*

Care should be taken to allow for the potential distinction of TEAPOT from the kettle, a vessel resembling a teapot, but intended for boiling water, rather than steeping tea.\(^8\)

There are few strong visual distinctions between TEAPOT and kettles, as the distinction is primarily one of function. Kettles do tend to have a top-handle rather than a side-handle, for greater portability. In addition, kettles are often made of heat-conducting metal while teapots may also be made of ceramic or porcelain. However, there are exceptions to all of these guidelines, including basic usage patterns; a number of cultures steep their tea inside the kettle used to heat/boil the water, such as the Kashmiri *samavar* (Figure 11) or some modern versions of the Japanese *tetsubin* (銅瓶) (Figure 8).

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\(^8\) Rousmaniere, *Collecting Teapots*, 2.
Figure 1. Search results for “teapot” on the Amazon US store, performed November 21, 2008. Note the three “tea kettle” entries returned in the non-sponsored results (highlighted in red). <https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=sr_il_to_kitchen?fst=as%3Aon&qid=1542821529&ie=UTF8&amp;lo=none>.
Indeed, the similarity and association between teapots and kettles is such that, in the Amazon search results for “teapot” on the US store, no fewer than three kettles returned in the top eight results (Figure 1), with two of the results explicitly using both the words “teapot” and “kettle” in their names. This suggests that, in some cultures, conflating the concepts of teapots and kettles is not in and of itself harmful.

Even so, it is worth attempting to draw a potential distinction between teapots and kettles. The general function of kettles suggests a more distinctive visual element that could form the basis of a future emoji proposal. Kettles, when used for boiling water, typically release steam from their spout (sometimes associated with a whistling sound, depending on the design of the kettle) (see Figure 2). This visual distinction (and the somewhat broader usage of kettles for boiling hot water for non-tea purposes) may therefore justify the addition of a separate “kettle spouting steam” emoji at a later date (though this may also be handled by the sequence TEAPOT followed by U+1F4A8 DASH SYMBOL, as described above in B.3 “Use in sequences”).

Therefore, while this proposal does not intend in any way to prescribe that the codepoint for TEAPOT explicitly excludes depictions of kettles, it is strongly recommended that the name of the emoji and the sample images used to depict it not conflate these two kinds of vessels in order to provide for forward-compatibility and to minimize the potential for confusion between the two concepts in cultures that may not as readily conflate them.
Background

Archaeological studies suggest that the teapot was first developed in or around the city of Yixing, in Jiangsu, China some time between the Song (960–1279 CE) and Yuan (1271–1368) dynasties. The area around Yixing appears to have been connected to pottery from an early date, perhaps dating back to the neolithic age, but evidence of the development of pottery making use of the characteristic dark-purple zisha (紫砂) clay associated with early Chinese teapots only dates to the Song dynasty.⁹

It is unclear if teapots were first made as part of this early usage of zisha clay. While sherds of zisha clay excavated at Yangjiaoshan in 1976 are suggestive of teapot-like vessels having been developed at this time,¹⁰ it is possible that these early forms may have instead served as predecessor forms to teapots, including kettles used to boil water and heated wine ewers.¹¹,¹²

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Based on records which are suggestive of a gradual shift in tea consumption from a whisked, powdered tea to loose-leaf tea, it is generally assumed that teapots began to see use in the late Yuan and early Ming dynasties. Corroborating this is a claim made by the early Qing author Cai Sizhan (蔡司沾), in his book Jiuyuan conghua (霁園丛话). In this book, Cai noted his purchase of a teapot that he asserted was once owned by Yuan scholar Sun Daoming (孙道明). If Cai’s claim is true (and his teapot authentic), then teapots must have been used for tea in the late Yuan, but the relatively late appearance of this claim (Cai lived some 300 years after the end of the Yuan dynasty) has caused some individuals to disagree with this assessment.

It is certain, however, that teapots saw use no later than the Ming dynasty. The earliest extant teapot, made by the potter Gongchun (供春), has been dated to 1513 and is now held by the Flagstaff House Museum of Teaware in Hong Kong. While tradition implies that teapots predated Gongchun’s work in the field, he is often called the father of the zisha teapot, having reportedly mastered the art form from monk potters at the Jinsha Temple near Yixing.

As European trade expanded to China in the mid to late Ming period, Chinese tea culture, including the usage of the teapot, was exported to Europe. Both the earliest recorded appearance of the English word “teapot” (as “chaw pot”) in the diary of an English merchant in Japan in 1616, and an early treatise on tea, Traitez nouveaux & curieux du café, du thé et du chocolate, by Philippe Sylvester Dufour, imply that Europeans were aware of teapots from their earliest exposure to tea-drinking (see Figure 6).

While the earliest teapots in Europe appear to be exported Yixing ware (like Figure 4), by the late 1600s, Europeans had begun to produce their own teapots using Yixing ware as a model (Figure 5). Other materials, such as glass (Figure 7), glazed porcelain and stoneware (Figure 8), and silver became increasingly common in European teapots through the 18th century.

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13 Rousmaniere, Collecting Teapots, 46.
14 Lo, Stonewares of Yixing, 18.
16 Rousmaniere, Collecting Teapots, 48.
17 Rousmaniere, Collecting Teapots, 48.
20 Rousmaniere, Collecting Teapots, 72–73.
Figure 6. “Chinois avec son pot de Thé,” etching from Traitez nouveaux & curieux du café, du thé et du chocolate, by Philippe Sylvestre Dufour, published 1688. A teapot is depicted at bottom right. Image courtesy of the University of Michigan Special Collections Research Center <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/s/sclib/x-39015093159898/34967_0003>.

Figure 4. A Yixing ware teapot with Kylin on lid dating from the Qianlong dynasty (1736–1795), held by Auckland War Memorial Museum. <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Teapot,_lidded_(AM_19304-2).jpg>.

Figure 5. A red stoneware teapot from Delft, c. 1680, held by Germanisches Nationalmuseum. Photograph by Daderot <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Teapot,_Delft,_c._1680,_red_stoneware_-_Germanisches_Nationalmuseum_-_Nuremberg,_Germany_-_DSC02616.jpg>.
Teapot shapes changed at the same time. As they were originally based on tall wine ewers, early teapots tended to have an elongated pear-shaped body with a straight spout and no strainer. The need to keep the tea leaves out of a teacup resulted in the addition of a strainer to the base of the spout and the subsequent development of the swan-like neck of the teapot. Likewise, the poor diffusion of tea extract throughout early tall teapots resulted in the development of smaller, more apple-shaped designs.23

Growing familiarity with the form also led to the development of more elaborate and varied designs, beginning with the rise of Japanese imari porcelain over the original zisha and Chinese blue and white porcelains in the late 17th century.24 European teapots such as those made by Meissen in Germany and by Josiah Wedgwood in England in the late 1700s25 (such as that in Figure 9) continued this experimentation, turning teapots into a collectible form of art.26, 27

By 1774, the association of teapots with tea in England and its American colonies was strong enough for teapots to be used symbolically in political cartoons such as “The able Doctor, or America Swallowing the Bitter Draught,” (Figure 11) which makes no direct mention of tea, but uses a teapot to stand for the perceived injustices of British laws such as the Boston Port Act, enacted by Parliament in response to the Boston Tea Party.

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25 Mair and Hoh, *True History of Tea*, 188.


Figure 9. Wedgwood earthenware teapot shaped like a cauliflower, 1765, held by the Wedgwood Museum, Barlaston, Stoke-on-Trent, England. Photograph by Daderot [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Teapot,_Josiah_Wedgwood,_1765,_cream-colored_earthenware,_green_glaze_-_Wedgwood_Museum_-_Barlaston,_Stoke-on-Trent,_England_-_DSC09534.jpg].

Figure 10. A Japanese sencha (煎茶) tea set, featuring two yunomi (湯のみ) teacups (left), tetsubin (鉄瓶) cast-iron tea kettle (center), and yokode kyūsu (横手急須), a common Japanese teapot design (right). Note the kyūsu handle, which is perpendicular to the spout rather than opposite, as in most other teapots, or over the lid, as with the tetsubin kettle. Photograph by the authors.

Figure 11. “The able Doctor, or America Swallowing the Bitter Drought.” British engraving, c. 1774. Held by the Boston Public Library. [https://www.flickr.com/photos/boston_public_library/5935079118].
At about the same time as Europeans began adopting and making teapots for themselves, Japanese tea-drinkers began to adapt the Fujian kettle known as the *kip-soey* (急焼), used to heat water and sake, into the teapot known as the *yokode kyūsu* (横手急須) (see Figure 10).

Like the *kip-soey* from which it was derived, the *yokode kyūsu* is distinguished by the location of its handle, which is placed perpendicular to the spout, rather than opposite the spout or over the lid, like other teapots and kettles.

The Islamic world, too, began adopting tea and teapots for its own by the mid 1700s. While tea was known of in parts of the Islamic world as early as the 9th century, it was not until the 17th century that parts of central Asia with land trade to China began consuming the drink with any regularity. As a result, it was only with the expansion of European trade in the 1700s that tea culture became established in most of the Islamic world, particularly in Morocco and the Maghreb (Figure 12), which very probably made use of silver teapots from its earliest days.

Not all regional tea cultures make extensive use of the teapot. Of particular note are those cultures that use samovar-based vessels for tea preparation, such as Russia, Iran, and Kashmir. However, some Russian-style samovars are designed to heat a teapot containing the

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30 Mair and Hoh, *True History of Tea*, 155.

zavarka, a strong concentrate of tea above the main body of the samovar (Figure 14). The zavarka in this teapot may then be diluted with the heated water in the samovar.\textsuperscript{32}

The Kashmiri samavar (Figure 13), used for the preparation of noon chai, is designed around the model of the Russian samovar; it is usually made of metal such as copper, and is built with a central heat source used to boil water in the vessel surrounding it. However, unlike Russian-style samovars, it is designed for pouring its contents into a cup like a traditional teapot, having both handle and spout.\textsuperscript{33}

Though they now drink the highest amount of tea per capita in the world,\textsuperscript{34} unlike the rest of the Islamic world, Turkish tea culture did not really become established until after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. As a result, its tea utensils are informed by developments in teapots, kettles, and samovars through the 19th century. The most unique element of Turkish tea culture, the Turkish “teapot” or çaydanlık (Figure 15), resembles a hybrid of the Russian samovar and the tea kettle, as a tea concentrate is heated in a second kettle located above a kettle used for boiling water.\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{32} Mair and Hoh, \textit{True History of Tea}, 144.


\textsuperscript{34} Martin, \textit{Tea}, 2.

\textsuperscript{35} Mair and Hoh, \textit{True History of Tea}, 163.
Figure 16. Art Deco Sadler racing car teapot, 1930s. Photograph by Teapotgeorge (<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sadler_car_teapot_30s.JPG>).


Figure 19 (right). Teapot caricature of Margaret Thatcher. Held by the People’s Palace in Glasgow. Photograph by dalbera (<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Peoples_Palace_(Glasgow)_3842739244.jpg>).
With the continued development and formalization of British tea culture in the 19th century, the accompanying teapot spread to the British colonies, such as Australia, South Africa, and Kenya. At the same time, new technical innovations resulted in internal improvements to the teapot, such as built-in metallic strainers and the teabag supplanted the traditional strainer holes placed at the base of the spout.

Modern teapots now take many forms. While many teapots may still have simplistic, geometric designs (such as that in Figure 3), others may take the form of anything from cars (Figure 16), to vintage radios (Figure 17), to animals (Figure 18), or even caricatures of politicians (Figure 19).

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38 Rappaport, *Thirst for Empire*, 79.


References


Acknowledgements

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