Tea for Vegans: What's Plant Based by Default

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Tea for vegans, in summary:** Plain tea is 95% vegan-by-default; check blends for honey and dairy "milk oolong"; Pukka/Clipper/Teapigs Vegan Society certified across UK ranges.

Last reviewed by the teas.co.uk team in March 2026.

Tea is naturally plant based, black, green, white, oolong, herbal, fruit infusions are all vegan. The vegan considerations checklist is short: avoid honey containing blends, check for dairy added to chai blends, and scan flavoured teas for non vegan natural flavourings (rare). Plant milk pairing, oat, almond, soy, works beautifully with all British tea styles.

Tea is plant based by default

Tea comes from the Camellia sinensis plant. Herbal infusions come from various herbs, flowers, fruits, roots. There's no animal product in the leaf or the brew itself. The vegan tea drinker can confidently buy 95% of the British tea range with no concerns.

The 5% vegans should check

Honey containing blends

Honey isn't vegan (animal product). Some blends include actual honey or honey flavouring derived from bees. Check the ingredients list for "honey" or "honey flavouring."

Common honey containing blends to check:

- Pukka Lemon, Ginger & Manuka Honey
- Twinings Lemon & Ginger with Honey variants
- Some throat soothing blends

Vegan alternatives: lemon & ginger without honey, or sweeten naturally with stevia, agave, or maple syrup.

Dairy added chai (rare in tea bag form, common in pre mixed)

Pure chai tea is plant based, black tea + spices. But pre mixed chai latte powder or pre mixed chai concentrate sometimes contains milk powder. Check the label.

For vegan chai: brew the tea bags or loose chai, then add oat or almond milk yourself. The result is an excellent vegan chai latte. Full chai latte recipe.

Some "natural flavourings"

Rare but possible. Some natural flavourings are derived from animal sources. Look for "vegan" certified labels (Vegan Society) for absolute confidence. Most flavoured tea is fine; this is a niche concern.

Some milk flavoured teas

"Milk oolong" is normally a flavour name, not actual milk content, but some commercial versions add milk powder for richer cup. Check the label or buy specialty single origin milk oolong (which is naturally fragrant without dairy).

Vegan confirmed tea categories

All pure black tea

Yorkshire Tea, Tetley, PG Tips, Twinings English Breakfast, Earl Grey, Assam, Darjeeling, Ceylon, pure black tea is plant based.

All green tea

Sencha, matcha, gunpowder, gyokuro, Pukka Three Green, Twinings Pure Green, all vegan.

All white and oolong tea

Bai mu dan, silver needle, Tieguanyin, Da Hong Pao, all plant based.

Most herbal infusions

Chamomile, peppermint, ginger, fennel, lemon balm, valerian, hibiscus, lavender, rose, all plant based.

Fruit infusions

Berry blends, peach, apple, citrus blends, plant based.

Pure rooibos

Plant based.

Best vegan tea pairings

Plant milk + tea

- **Oat milk:** best for British black tea (Yorkshire, Tetley). Creamy, neutral, doesn't curdle.
- **Soy milk:** excellent for chai. Strong enough to handle spice.
- **Almond milk:** good for green tea lattes and chai.
- **Coconut milk:** pairs with chai and matcha.
- **Cashew milk:** premium creamy option for matcha lattes.

Vegan sweeteners

- Maple syrup (vegan confirmed)
- Agave nectar
- Date syrup
- Coconut sugar
- Stevia
- White or brown sugar (vegan if not bone char filtered, UK sugar mostly is fine)

Vegan chai recipe

1. 1 chai tea bag + 200ml water, simmer 3 minutes.
2. Add 200ml oat milk, simmer further 2 minutes.
3. Sweeten with maple syrup to taste.
4. Strain and drink.

Or use Pukka Chai Originale, MoreTea Chai, or specialty masala chai.

Vegan matcha latte

1. 1g matcha + 30ml hot (not boiling) water. Whisk to paste.
2. Heat 200ml oat milk. Pour over matcha paste.
3. Sweeten to taste.

Vegan afternoon tea

The classic British afternoon tea, black tea + scones + cream + jam, needs vegan adaptation. Many UK hotels and tearooms now offer vegan afternoon tea: vegan scones, dairy free cream, vegan sandwiches and pastries. The tea itself stays the same, Earl Grey, English Breakfast, Darjeeling.

At home: vegan scones (oil based recipe) + coconut whipped cream + jam + good Earl Grey = excellent vegan afternoon tea.

UK vegan tea brands

- **Pukka.** Most range is vegan. Vegan Society certified on most products.
- **Clipper.** Most range vegan. Plant based labelling clear.
- **Yorkshire Tea, Tetley, PG Tips.** Pure black tea, vegan.
- **Twinings.** Most range vegan; check honey containing variants.
- **Heath & Heather.** Range mostly vegan.
- **teas.co.uk, with trade friends like Mei Leaf and Postcard Teas.** Specialty single origin, vegan.

Tea bag material check

Some standard tea bags use a small amount of plastic in the heat seal (PLA, sometimes derived from corn, vegan; sometimes derived from polypropylene, also vegan but not biodegradable). Animal derived materials in tea bags are not common in the UK market. The bag itself is generally fine.

FAQ

Is all tea vegan? Almost. Black, green, white, oolong, most herbal, all plant based. Check honey containing and dairy added variants.

Best vegan milk for British black tea? Oat milk, creamy, neutral, doesn't curdle.

Best vegan chai? Pukka Chai Originale + oat milk + maple syrup.

Vegan afternoon tea? Many UK venues now offer it. At home with vegan scones + dairy free cream.

Vegan matcha latte? Matcha + oat milk + maple syrup.

Curator's note: tea is one of the easiest to vegan ise daily rituals. Most of the British tea range is plant based already. The plant milk pairing, oat for black, almond for green, soy for chai, is genuinely as good as dairy. Lee, teas.co.uk, Tunbridge Wells.

Quick reference: vegan tea

Aspect	The note
Tea itself	Plant-based; 95% of tea is vegan-by-default
Honey blends	Not vegan; check pack ingredients
Cream/milk flavoured	Some "milk oolong" use dairy; check label
Tea-bag material	Most UK brands now plant-based; some still use polypropylene
Pack glue	Mostly vegan; some heritage brands use animal-derived
Pukka, Clipper, Teapigs	Vegan Society certified across full range
Vegan chai latte	Use oat milk; a meaningful substitute
The read	Pure tea is vegan; check blends for honey or dairy

Reference noted

- PubMed: Green tea catechins and human health

Plain shopping notes for this topic: English Breakfast, Earl Grey, green tea, loose leaf tea, Darjeeling, oolong , and herbal tea. The whole tea range is here, free UK postage kicks in at £35.

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · Per-cup price is the only price that matters. Loose leaf usually wins; supermarket bags sometimes do too.

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- Black tea
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