Tea India: Authentic Indian Chai in British Supermarkets

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Tea India, in summary:** Genuinely authentic style Indian chai and strong CTC Assam on ordinary UK shelves: the robust base a real simmered masala chai actually needs.

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

Tea India is one of the most authentic Indian chai brands available in British supermarkets, Premium Quality CTC Assam tea + traditional masala spice profile + the actual brewing technique of Indian street chai. The brand goes harder on spice than Pukka or Twinings chai, sticks to genuine Indian production, and is the supermarket budget answer for masala chai that tastes like the chai you'd actually get in Delhi or Mumbai.

Tea India, the brand

Tea India is owned by JDE Peet's (Jacobs Douwe Egberts) but originated as a heritage brand emphasising authentic Indian tea. The range focuses on:

- CTC Assam black tea (the standard Indian breakfast tea).
- Cardamom led masala chai (the traditional Indian morning drink).
- Ginger led variants.
- A budget tier price point.

The brand sits between mass market British tea (Yorkshire, Tetley) and premium specialty (Pukka, MoreTea). Genuinely good for the price.

Why Tea India is more authentic than UK chai brands

The CTC method

Tea India uses CTC (crush tear curl) Assam, the standard Indian processing method. Produces small, granular leaf that brews quickly and strongly. Most British "chai" uses larger leaf Indian tea blended with British tea, which is less authentic.

The spice profile

Indian masala chai is cardamom dominant with cinnamon, ginger, cloves, and black pepper supporting. Many British chai brands are sweeter and lighter, adding vanilla or apple flavours. Tea India keeps it traditional.

The brewing tradition

Tea India is designed for the pan brewing method, water + tea + spice simmered for 3-5 minutes, then milk and sugar added and simmered further. This is how Indian street chai is made. Most British chai is bag brewed in a mug, which doesn't extract the same depth.

The Tea India range

Tea India Premium Quality CTC

Standard Assam CTC black tea. The British Indian breakfast tea. Strong, malty, ideal for milk + sugar.

Tea India Cardamom Masala Chai

Cardamom led traditional masala. The flagship product. Strong cardamom + supporting spices + CTC tea.

Tea India Ginger Masala Chai

Ginger led; warming. Good winter version.

Tea India Saffron Masala Chai

Premium saffron addition. Specialty grade flavour.

Tea India Decaf Cardamom

The decaf version of the cardamom masala. Same spice character without caffeine.

How to brew Tea India properly

Pan brewed method (the right way)

1. 200ml water + 200ml whole milk in a saucepan.
2. 2 Tea India Cardamom Masala bags (open and empty into pan, or keep whole).
3. 1 cardamom pod (cracked) + small piece fresh ginger (optional reinforcement).
4. Bring to gentle simmer.
5. Simmer 4-5 minutes (don't boil hard).
6. Add 1-2 tsp sugar to taste.
7. Strain into cups.

The result tastes like authentic Indian street chai, cardamom dominant, milky, spiced, slightly sweet.

Quick mug method (acceptable)

1. 1 Tea India Masala bag in a mug.

2. 200ml just boiled water. Steep 4 minutes.
3. Add 50ml hot milk + 1 tsp sugar.
4. Drink.

Less depth than pan brewed but functional.

Tea India vs other UK chai brands

vs Pukka Chai Originale

Pukka is more delicate, cardamom light, with vanilla undertones. Tea India is stronger, more cardamom dominant, more authentic.

vs Twinings Chai

Twinings is sweeter, more cinnamon led. Tea India is more traditional Indian.

vs MoreTea Chai

MoreTea is similarly authentic, slightly more premium priced. Both excellent.

vs Premium specialty chai (teas.co.uk, with friends Mei Leaf and Postcard Teas)

Specialty chai is loose leaf, premium priced. Tea India is the budget tier of "really good chai."

Why authentic chai matters

British "chai latte" coffee shop chai is often sweet syrup with mild spice, served with frothed milk, a long way from Indian chai. Tea India + the pan method recreates the actual Indian morning drink.

For the British drinker who's been drinking Pumpkin Spice chai or vanilla chai latte and wondering what the fuss is about, brewing pan Indian chai with Tea India is a revelation. The cardamom dominance, the milky depth, the warming spice, it's a different drink.

Tea India + biscuits

Pan brewed masala chai pairs with:

- Indian biscuits (Britannia Bourbon, Marie biscuits), the traditional pairing.
- British shortbread.
- Digestive biscuits.
- Chocolate Hobnobs.
- Spiced biscuits (gingerbread).

Caffeine

40-60mg per cup of Tea India CTC. Strong morning caffeine. The masala spices don't add or subtract from the caffeine; they're flavour.

Where to buy

- UK supermarkets (Tesco, Sainsbury's, Asda), most stock Cardamom Masala.
- Online specialist retailers, full range.
- Indian grocers, full range plus larger pack sizes.

Tea India price comparison

Tea India is genuinely good value:

- £3-4 for 80 bags = ~5p per bag.
- Pukka Chai Originale: £3-4 for 20 bags = 15-20p per bag.
- Premium loose leaf chai: £8-15 per 100g = 25-50p per cup.

For the budget minded chai drinker, Tea India is the value champion.

FAQ

Is Tea India authentic? Yes, CTC Assam + traditional masala spice profile + Indian production.

How to brew for best result? Pan brew with milk + sugar + extra fresh ginger or cardamom for 4-5 minutes.

Caffeine? 40-60mg per cup. Standard Assam CTC level.

Vegan? Yes, pure tea + spices. Use plant milk for vegan chai latte.

Where to buy in UK? Major supermarkets, Indian grocers, specialty online retailers.

Curator's note: Tea India is the best value authentic Indian chai in British supermarkets. The Cardamom Masala pan brewed with milk is genuinely the closest you'll get to Delhi street chai without flying there. Worth keeping for proper masala mornings. Lee, teas.co.uk, Tunbridge Wells.

Tea India, judged

Aspect	Tea India
What it is	authentic Indian chai and CTC Assam, on British shelves
Base	strong CTC Assam, the genuine masala chai backbone
Caffeine	yes, full black tea base
Best use	a properly strong, milk and spice simmered chai
Why it matters	closer to authentic than most mainstream "chai" bags

Reference noted

- EFSA Scientific Opinion on the Safety of Caffeine (2015)

If this piece pointed you somewhere, these are the obvious places to land: English Breakfast, Earl Grey, green tea, loose leaf tea, Darjeeling, oolong, and herbal tea. The rest of the tea shop sits here, with UK shipping free above £35.

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · Free UK delivery starts at £35, which is two or three good bags. Build a small order rather than a single splurge.

Tea India reading

- Chai tea (the pillar)
- Chai category
- Caffeine free chai
- Chai from scratch

More from the tea wiki

- Green tea
- Black tea
- Oolong tea
- White tea
- Herbal tea
- Caffeine in tea
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