Why Is Tea Expensive in Canada?

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Why tea is expensive in Canada, in summary:** Tea is dearer in Canada for structural reasons: all imported, a small market across a huge country, and UK brands sold as specialties.

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

Tea is more expensive in Canada than the UK because of import distance, a smaller market, currency factors and a different retail structure. Per-cup tea pricing in Canada runs roughly 2x the UK for equivalent products. Tetley has a strong Canadian presence; UK brands are available at premium import pricing. Specialty tea is expensive everywhere; the mainstream gap is the bigger issue.

Why Canada pays more

Import distance

Canada is further from the major tea producers (India, Sri Lanka, Kenya) than the UK, so shipping costs more.

Market scale

Smaller per-capita consumption means less volume buying power.

Currency

Canadian dollar fluctuations affect import costs in CAD terms.

Retail structure

Canadian retail margins differ from the UK supermarket structure.

Tariffs and duties

Trade arrangements feed through to tea pricing.

Specific pricing comparison

- UK Yorkshire Tea 240-bag: £12-15 (~CAD$22-28).
- Canada equivalent: ~CAD$10-12 for a smaller pack.
- Per cup UK: 5-7p (~CAD$0.10-0.12).
- Per cup Canada: ~CAD$0.18-0.25.

Tetley in Canada

Tetley has a strong Canadian market presence, with pricing comparable to other mass-market Canadian brands. UK brands (Yorkshire Tea, PG Tips) are available at premium pricing as imports.

Specialty tea

Premium specialty tea is expensive everywhere. The Canadian premium tier is broadly comparable to the UK premium tier in CAD-equivalent terms.

Solutions for British expats in Canada

- Bulk import via Amazon UK (sometimes cost-effective).
- Visit British shops in Canadian cities (Toronto and Vancouver have specialist British food retailers).
- Substitute Canadian Tetley if the quality is acceptable.
- Order direct from UK brand websites with international shipping.
- Switch to loose leaf bought in bulk, the single biggest cost-per-cup saving.

Other expensive tea countries

- USA: moderate, similar to Canada.
- Australia: moderate.
- Continental Europe: varies.
- Russia: actually cheap.
- Turkey: very cheap (domestic production).

FAQ

Why expensive in Canada? Import distance, a smaller market, and currency.

How much more? Roughly 2x UK pricing.

Best solution? Tetley Canada, or import via specialty retailers.

Bulk import? Sometimes cost-effective for committed UK-style tea drinkers.

Why tea costs more in Canada, at a glance

Factor	The read
No domestic production	All tea is imported; freight and distance add cost

Factor	The read
Small market, big country	Lower volumes, long internal distribution, higher per-pack cost
Tariffs & import path	Import and handling costs feed through to shelf price
Brand availability	Familiar UK brands are imported specialties, priced accordingly
Fix for expats	Buy loose leaf and in bulk; cost per cup drops sharply

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · Match the tea to the moment. In Canada or at home, your 6am and 4pm cups can be different teas.

Tea reading

- How to save money on tea
- Why is tea getting more expensive
- Loose leaf vs tea bags
- Tea abroad

The bottom line on Canadian tea prices

Tea costs more in Canada for unremarkable structural reasons, no domestic production so everything is imported, a small market spread across a huge country raising distribution cost, and familiar British brands sold as imported specialties, not any rip-off. The fix is the universal value lever: buy loose leaf in larger quantities, and the cost per cup falls sharply, because you stop paying repeatedly for small packaging and the shipping of mostly air. A good loose-leaf everyday black bought in bulk is usually both cheaper and better than hunting down an expensive familiar box. The same logic explains why parts of the US, Australia and the Gulf feel expensive to a British palate; it is structural and solvable the same way everywhere.

More from the tea wiki

- Green tea
- Black tea
- Oolong tea
- White tea
- Herbal tea
- Caffeine in tea
- How to make tea properly
- Loose leaf vs teabag

Earn rewards on teas.co.uk

Earn loyalty points on every order. Free to join.

+100 pts

Create your free account

Welcome bonus + earn on every order.



100 pts = 1 tree

Plant a tree in Scotland

Pledge points to our reforestation partner.

