

## Black Tea by Origin: A Practical Map

From the Teas.co.uk wiki

**Black tea by origin, in summary:** Black tea by origin, a practical map: Assam and Darjeeling, Ceylon, Keemun and Yunnan, Kenya, what each tastes like and how to choose by origin not brand.

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for Black Tea by Origin: A Practical Map. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/black-tea-by-origin/>*

Our [black tea guide](#) covers the category; this page is the origin map it points to, because once you can taste origin you stop being dependent on brand names.

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

### India: Assam and Darjeeling

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for India: Assam and Darjeeling, Black Tea by Origin: A Practical Map. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/black-tea-by-origin/>*

Assam is the strong, malty, milk-friendly powerhouse from the Brahmaputra valley, the backbone of breakfast blends. Darjeeling is the light, floral, grapey Himalayan tea best drunk without milk, and it changes by season, see the [four flushes](#). Two Indian teas that could not be more different, which is why the [three-way comparison](#) is worth reading.

### Sri Lanka: Ceylon

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Sri Lanka: Ceylon, Black Tea by Origin: A Practical Map. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/black-tea-by-origin/>*

Ceylon is bright, brisk and citrusy, with character that shifts by elevation: high-grown is delicate and lively, low-grown is darker and stronger. It is the great all-rounder and the best of the classic blacks for iced tea, covered in the [Ceylon guide](#).

### China: Keemun and Yunnan

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for China: Keemun and Yunnan, Black Tea by Origin: A Practical Map. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/black-tea-by-origin/>*

Keemun, from Anhui, is the elegant one: smooth, lightly smoky, cocoa and stone-fruit notes, the traditional base of an English Breakfast in its original sense and a tea to drink without milk. Yunnan black (Dian Hong) is malty, sweet, peppery and gold-tipped, rich enough to enjoy alone. Chinese blacks are generally smoother and less brisk than Indian ones, a different idea of what black tea is.

## Africa: Kenya

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Africa: Kenya, Black Tea by Origin: A Practical Map. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/black-tea-by-origin/>*

Kenyan black tea, mostly made by the brisk CTC method, is bold, brisk, colour-heavy and consistent. You rarely see it named because it is the unsung bulk of countless teabag blends, the reason your everyday brew is strong and quick. It is not glamorous, but it is clear, reliable strength and the workhorse of the British cuppa.

## How to use this map

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for How to use this map, Black Tea by Origin: A Practical Map. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/black-tea-by-origin/>*

Choosing by origin instead of brand: want strong and milky, look for Assam or Kenyan-heavy blends. Want bright and versatile, Ceylon. Want smooth and milkless, Keemun or Yunnan. Want delicate and seasonal, Darjeeling by flush. Most supermarket "English Breakfast" is an Assam/Kenya/Ceylon blend tuned for strength and milk, which is why the [breakfast blends](#) page reads the way it does.

## Why origin beats brand

Brand tells you a recipe and a price point; origin tells you what the tea will actually do in the cup, how strong, how it takes milk, whether it suits iced or afternoon drinking. Learn the half-dozen origins above and you can walk into any tea aisle, read the back of the pack, and predict the cup before you buy it. That is the whole point of the [black tea guide](#) this map supports.

## Black tea by origin, at a glance

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for Black Tea by Origin: A Practical Map. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/black-tea-by-origin/>*

Origin	Character	Best for
Assam (India)	Strong, malty, milk-friendly	The backbone of breakfast blends
Darjeeling (India)	Light, floral, grapey, seasonal	Drunk without milk, by flush
Ceylon (Sri Lanka)	Bright, brisk, citrusy, elevation-driven	The all-rounder and best for iced
Keemun (China)	Smooth, lightly smoky, cocoa, stone-fruit	Milkless, the original English Breakfast base
Yunnan / Dian Hong (China)	Malty, sweet, peppery, gold-tipped	Rich enough to drink alone

Origin	Character	Best for
Kenya	Bold, brisk, colour-heavy, CTC	The unsung workhorse of teabag blends

## The format and grade layer the map does not show

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for The format and grade layer the map does not show, Black Tea by Origin: A Practical Map. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/black-tea-by-origin/>*

Origin sets the character, but two more dials decide whether you actually taste it. The first is manufacture: orthodox whole-leaf keeps the origin nuance and re-steeps, while CTC (crush, tear, curl) trades nuance for a fast, strong, colour-heavy cup that suits milk and a quick bag, which is why most supermarket blends taste of strength rather than place. The second is leaf grade: a fine fanning brews faster and harsher than the same leaf left whole, so a Ceylon in a teabag and the same Ceylon as loose orange pekoe can read very differently. Neither changes the origin signature; they change how loudly it speaks. Brew any origin at a full boil for three to four minutes with enough leaf and the place comes through.

**Related on the wiki:** [Black Tea vs Coffee, Explained](#).

## Reference noted

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Reference noted, Black Tea by Origin: A Practical Map. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/black-tea-by-origin/>*

- [Encyclopaedia Britannica: Tea \(history\)](#)

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## Tea reading

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Tea reading, Black Tea by Origin: A Practical Map. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/black-tea-by-origin/>*

- [Black tea guide](#)
- [Darjeeling vs Assam vs Ceylon](#)
- [Black vs green tea, the practical difference](#)

## Quick take

Black tea makes more sense by origin than by brand: Assam is the strong milky powerhouse, Darjeeling the light seasonal one drunk black, Ceylon the bright all-rounder and best iced, Keemun the smooth milkless Chinese classic, Yunnan the malty gold-tipped sipper, Kenya the brisk CTC workhorse hidden in most teabags. Choose by what the cup should do, and you stop being dependent on the label. See the [black tea](#)

[pillar](#) and the [best British tea bags guide](#).

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](#). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for Black Tea by Origin: A Practical Map. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/black-tea-by-origin/>*

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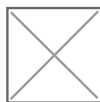
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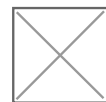
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