Clipper, Fairtrade and Unbleached Bags

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Clipper Fairtrade and unbleached bags, in summary:** Clipper built its name on Fairtrade economics and plastic free unbleached bags. What those audited claims mean, why they matter, and a clear note on stock.

Our Clipper deep dive profiles the brand; this page covers the two things Clipper is really known for, Fairtrade and unbleached bags, with a clear word on stock at the end.

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

What Fairtrade actually certifies

Fairtrade certification is about the economics at the growing end: a minimum price floor, a community premium paid on top, and standards on labour and conditions, independently audited. For tea, much of which is grown by workers and smallholders with little bargaining power, that is a meaningful claim about how the people who picked the leaf were treated and paid. It is not a flavour or quality claim, and it does not by itself make the tea taste better; it is an ethics of sourcing claim, and that is the clear way to frame it.

The unbleached, plastic free bag

Clipper made an early point of using unbleached (natural coloured) paper teabags and moving to plant based, non plastic, heat sealed bags free of the polypropylene many teabags used. The unbleached part avoids chlorine bleaching of the bag paper; the plastic free part addresses the microplastic concern covered in our plastic in teabags note. Together they are a coherent "what touches your tea and what goes in the bin" story, and Clipper was well ahead of much of the industry on it.

Why this combination matters

Plenty of brands do one ethical thing. Clipper is notable for stacking grower economics (Fairtrade), bag chemistry (unbleached) and end of life (plastic free, compostable) into one consistent position, often alongside organic lines too. For a shopper who cares about the supply chain and the bin as much as the cup, that combined stance is the differentiator, and it is externally certified rather than self declared, which is the part that makes it credible.

How it compares

Different badges answer different worries. Pukka leads on organic and Fair for Life, and is no longer a B Corp; Clipper leads on Fairtrade and bag frankness, and its maker, Ecotone UK, is a certified B Corp; Teapigs leads on leaf quality and plant-based temples. None is strictly better; they optimise for different values. Knowing which certification addresses which concern lets you buy on the one you actually care about instead of a vague green impression.

A clear note on availability

We do not currently stock the Clipper range at teas.co.uk, so this page is here to inform, not to sell you Clipper. If the Fairtrade and plastic free combination is what you are after, the closest equivalents we do carry are the organic and ethically positioned ranges such as Pukka and Dragonfly, both covered in our brand guides. We would rather tell you that clearly than pretend otherwise; a wiki that profiles a brand owes you a straight answer on buying it here.

What the two claims actually mean, in one place

Claim	What it certifies	What it is not
Fairtrade	a minimum price floor, a community premium, audited labour and conditions at the growing end	not a flavour or quality claim
Unbleached bag	no chlorine bleaching of the bag paper	not a taste difference; the cup is identical
Plastic free bag	plant based, heat sealed, no polypropylene; compostable	not an organic or sourcing claim by itself

Related on the wiki: Fairtrade Tea Explained: What the Mark Really Does.

Reference noted

- Encyclopaedia Britannica: Tea (history)
- Fairtrade Foundation: Tea

FROM THE CURATOR

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Tea reading

- Clipper deep dive
- Pukka, organic and B Corp
- Plastic in teabags

The summary

Clipper's reputation rests on real, audited things: Fairtrade economics for growers and unbleached, plastic free bags. Those are sourcing and materials claims, not flavour ones, and they are credibly certified. We stock it: the Clipper range covers its everyday, organic, decaf and infusion teas. If you want more in the same spirit, Pukka and Dragonfly are the nearest match.

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