Is Bottled Water Better for Tea?

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Bottled water for tea, in summary:** Bottled water for tea: Volvic works, Evian doesn't, sparkling never. Why filtered tap beats most bottled brands for UK tea brewing.

Is bottled water better for tea? Sometimes, sometimes worse, and rarely worth it for daily drinking. The answer is on the label. This sits beside best water for tea in the water cluster.

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

It depends entirely on the bottle

Bottled waters range from very soft to extremely mineral heavy. A low mineral still water can brew a clean, bright cup; a hard mineral water can be worse than your tap, see does water quality affect tea. There is no single "bottled equals better".

Read the mineral content

Look for total dissolved solids or the mineral breakdown. Low to moderate, gently mineralised still water suits tea best. Very high mineral waters mute and flatten it much as hard tap does, see hard vs soft water.

Never sparkling

Sparkling water is wrong for hot tea: the carbonation and added salts clash with the brew, and the dissolved CO2 escapes on heating to leave a flat, oddly mineral cup. This is one place the answer is simply no. (For cold brew or iced tea it can work as a mixer with already-brewed concentrate.)

The waste problem

Even when a particular still water makes a great cup, using bottled water for every brew is expensive and environmentally poor. For daily tea a filter jug achieves most of the benefit far more cheaply and cleanly, see filtered water for tea.

When it makes sense

Bottled water is reasonable as an occasional treat for a special tea, or in a very hard water area for a prized delicate leaf where a filter is not enough. As an everyday default it is hard to justify.

Not the same as distilled

Do not confuse low mineral bottled water with distilled or purified zero mineral water; the latter is actively bad for tea because some mineral content is needed to extract flavour, see distilled water and tea.

What it boils down to

Bottled water is only better if it is low to moderate mineral still water, and even then a filter usually matches it for daily tea at a fraction of the cost and waste, see best water for tea.

In short: Bottled water for tea

Brand / type	Mineral content	Good for tea?
Volvic	~109 mg/L total dissolved solids; low calcium (12 mg/L)	Yes; one of the best bottled options for tea
Highland Spring	~120 mg/L TDS; moderate	Reasonable; broadly OK for tea
Tesco Welsh Spring	~150 mg/L TDS; moderate	Reasonable budget option
Evian	~300 mg/L TDS; high calcium	Not ideal; behaves like moderately hard tap water
Vittel	~840 mg/L TDS; very high calcium and magnesium	Bad for tea; worse than UK hard tap water
San Pellegrino, Acqua Panna	~720-1100 mg/L TDS; high mineral	Bad for tea; intended for drinking, not brewing
Sparkling water (any brand)	Carbonation interferes with brewing chemistry	Never use sparkling for hot tea
Filtered tap water	Variable; depends on input water + filter	Beats most bottled in UK; cheaper

Reading the label: the numbers to aim for

UK labels must show mineral content per litre, and two figures matter for tea: total dissolved solids (TDS) and calcium. Aim for TDS in the 50 to 150 mg/L band and calcium under about 30 mg/L, the low to moderate "naturally soft" range tea brews best in. Below that, toward distilled or zero mineral, the cup goes flat because some mineral is needed to extract properly; well above it the cup mutes exactly as hard tap does. For scale, San Pellegrino sits over 1,100 mg/L, roughly ten times Volvic's 109, which is why it is a drinking water, not a brewing one.

What to buy

If you do use bottled, Volvic (low-mineral, consistent) or Highland Spring are the tea-friendly choices; avoid Evian, Vittel and the Italian mineral waters. For everyday brewing a Brita filter jug (£25 to £40) beats almost any bottle on cost, cup and waste.

Same shelf, same shop: the English tea range and loose leaf range.

Reference noted

- NHS: Water, drinks and your health

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · Begin with the plainest, cheapest water you can find. Spend more only once you have tasted that it matters.

More water reading

For broader water context see the best water for tea guide and does water quality affect tea. For the filtration alternative see filtered water for tea. For the zero-mineral case see distilled water and tea. For tap-water context see is tap water OK for tea.

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