

Which UK Teabags Are Plastic Free?

From the Teas.co.uk wiki

The short version: A UK guide to plastic-free teabag brands: Dragonfly, Hampstead, Pukka, Clipper, Yorkshire Tea. PLA caveats and verification approach.

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for Which UK Teabags Are Plastic Free?. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/which-teabags-are-plastic-free-uk/>*

"Plastic free" on a teabox does not always mean what you think. This sits in the teabag safety cluster beside [are teabags plastic](#).

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

General information based on published studies and brand testing, accurate as of May 2026; the science is evolving and figures are estimates, not medical advice.

UK teabag plastic-free status (May 2026)

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for UK teabag plastic-free status (May 2026), Which UK Teabags Are Plastic Free?. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/which-teabags-are-plastic-free-uk/>*

Brand	Plastic-free status
Dragonfly	Genuinely plastic-free (stitched paper bags, cotton string)
Hampstead Tea	Genuinely plastic-free
Pukka	Genuinely plastic-free (stitched paper bags)
Clipper	Plastic-free for standard bags (PLA pyramid range separately)
Yorkshire Tea	Plastic-free since 2020 (transitioned all standard product)
Twinings	Bag material plastic-free; string/tag may contain plastic in some variants
PG Tips	Plastic-free standard bags (transition completed 2022-2023)
Teapigs	Plant-based (PLA) tea temples - technically plastic, plant-derived
Tetley	Some product lines plastic-free; verify per-product
Supermarket own-brand	Variable; many use PLA marketed as "plastic-free"

Brand**Plastic-free status**

Typhoo

Transition signaled under Supreme PLC (2025+ relaunch)

What the testing found

Independent testing reported by the consumer group Which? examined 28 UK brands and found only a small minority genuinely plastic-free across every component, the bag, the heat-seal, the string, the tag and the wrapper. As of mid-2026 the cleanest names are a short list, Dragonfly, Hampstead Tea and Pukka, all using stitched paper bags, plus Clipper, Yorkshire Tea (plastic-free since 2020) and PG Tips for their standard bag lines, with caveats on specific variants. Twinings was noted as plastic-free in the bag but with plastic possible in some string or tag. Treat any list as dated and re-check current packaging, since brand transitions keep happening.

The PLA caveat

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for Which UK Teabags Are Plastic Free?. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/which-teabags-are-plastic-free-uk/>*

The biggest source of confusion is PLA (polylactic acid), a plant-based plastic made from corn starch or sugarcane. Some makers market PLA bags as plastic-free because it is plant-derived rather than petroleum-based, but it is still a polymer that behaves like other plastics in many ways, so the label is misleading read strictly. Research on PLA-specific shedding under brewing heat is thinner than for conventional plastics, and the conservative view is that PLA is not equivalent to true paper-only construction. It is also industrially compostable but not home compostable, so compostable on a PLA pack means an industrial facility, not your garden bin. See [what PLA is](#).

The string, tag and wrapper layers

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for The string, tag and wrapper layers, Which UK Teabags Are Plastic Free?. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/which-teabags-are-plastic-free-uk/>*

It pays to look beyond the bag itself, because a teabag can hide plastic in several places. The bag material is the main concern, but the string is sometimes nylon rather than cotton, the tag is sometimes plastic-coated for water resistance, the individual envelope is sometimes plastic-coated cellulose, and even the box can have a plastic inner coating. For genuine plastic-elimination, all of these need to be plastic-free, not just the bag. The truly clean brands (Dragonfly, Hampstead, Pukka) tend to be plastic-free across every component, whereas many plastic-free bag brands still carry a plastic string, tag or wrapper.

How to verify a claim yourself

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for How to verify a claim yourself, Which UK Teabags Are Plastic Free?. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/which-teabags-are-plastic-free-uk/>*

A few habits cut through the marketing. Read the packaging literally: plastic-free or 100% biodegradable is more reliable than vague natural materials or eco-friendly. Look for specific certifications, TUV Austria's OK Compost Home is the strictest home-compostability mark, EN13432 covers industrial composting. Check brand websites, where ethical brands usually disclose materials component by component. Search independent testing from Which? or Ethical Consumer for third-party verification. And when in doubt, default to loose leaf, which sidesteps the question entirely. See [how to avoid plastic](#).

Pricing across plastic-free brands

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Pricing across plastic-free brands, Which UK Teabags Are Plastic Free?. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/which-teabags-are-plastic-free-uk/*

Going plastic-free does not have to cost more. Mainstream plastic-free options like Yorkshire Tea and PG Tips sell at roughly the same price as their old plastic versions; the switch did not push prices up. Mid-tier ethical brands like Clipper and Heath and Heather sit a little above that, around ten to twenty per cent, reflecting organic and Fairtrade certification as well. Premium brands like Pukka and Dragonfly cost substantially more, reflecting herbalist recipes, direct fair-trade sourcing and B Corp positioning rather than the plastic-free claim alone. So plastic-free is affordable if a mainstream brand suits you; committed ethical buying is what costs more.

Loose-leaf: the simplest certainty

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Loose-leaf: the simplest certainty, Which UK Teabags Are Plastic Free?. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/which-teabags-are-plastic-free-uk/*

The single cleanest answer is loose-leaf tea, brewed with a stainless-steel infuser, a teapot and strainer or a gaiwan. No bag means no plastic across any component, the cost is usually lower per cup than premium plastic-free bags, and the cup is generally better. The only barriers are practical, a little kit and a little clean-up, not economic. See [loose leaf tea](#).

What to buy

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For the most rigorously plastic-free bagged tea buy [Dragonfly](#), [Hampstead Tea](#) or [Pukka](#) (all stitched paper). For mainstream plastic-free buy [Clipper](#), [Yorkshire Tea](#), [PG Tips](#) or [Heath and Heather](#). For absolute certainty buy [loose-leaf tea](#). For the kit buy a [teapot](#) or a [stainless-steel infuser](#).

Reference noted

- [Hernandez et al., Plastic Teabags Release Particles \(2019\)](#)
- [Food Standards Scotland: Microplastics in food](#)

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for Which UK Teabags Are Plastic Free?. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/which-teabags-are-plastic-free-uk/*

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More tea reading

Source: [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for More tea reading, Which UK Teabags Are Plastic Free?. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/which-teabags-are-plastic-free-uk/*

For the broader plastic question see [are teabags plastic](#) and [microplastics in teabags explained](#). For PLA specifically see [what is PLA in teabags](#). For PFAS concerns see [PFAS in teabags](#). For switching see [the switch guide](#). For loose-leaf brewing see [brewing loose leaf tea](#).

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- [How to make tea properly](#)
- [Loose leaf vs teabag](#)

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