

# Why Is Tea Getting More Expensive?

From the Teas.co.uk wiki

**The short version:** Tea is dearer for converging reasons: climate-hit harvests, cost inflation down the chain, and trade friction, showing as higher prices and shrinkflation.

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for Why Is Tea Getting More Expensive?. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/why-is-tea-getting-more-expensive/>*

Your tea genuinely is dearer, and not only because of general inflation. This sits at the centre of the climate and cost cluster beside [climate change and tea](#).

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

*Market and climate information based on public reporting, accurate as of May 2026; figures are estimates and change. Not financial advice.*

## Why tea is getting more expensive, 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 Why Is Tea Getting More Expensive?. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/why-is-tea-getting-more-expensive/>*

| Factor          | Read  |
|-----------------|---|
| Climate         | Erratic weather has hit harvests in key growing regions             |
| Cost inflation  | Energy, freight, labour and packaging costs up down the whole chain |
| Trade & tariffs | Import costs and trade friction feed through to the shelf           |
| How it shows    | Higher prices and shrinkflation rather than empty shelves           |
| What to do      | Buy loose leaf, by cost per cup, in sensible quantities             |

## The three pressures

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for The three pressures, Why Is Tea Getting More Expensive?. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/why-is-tea-getting-more-expensive/>*

Tea is dearer for a stack of ordinary pressures, not a single villain. Climate is the headline: erratic rainfall, heat and extreme weather in major growing regions, parts of East Africa and South Asia especially, have cut both harvest volumes and quality, and a perennial bush cannot simply be replanted for next quarter, so the shocks persist. Cost inflation down the whole chain is the second: energy, fertiliser, freight, labour and packaging have all risen, and tea is a low-margin commodity where those costs get passed through rather than absorbed. Trade and tariff friction is the third, adding cost and unpredictability at borders. See [climate change and tea](#) and [tea tariffs](#).

## A price story, not a shortage

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](#). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for A price story, not a shortage, Why Is Tea Getting More Expensive?. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/why-is-tea-getting-more-expensive/>*

Crucially, this shows up as higher prices and smaller packs, shrinkflation, rather than empty shelves. Global supply is strained, not collapsing: there is still plenty of tea, it simply costs more to grow, move and pack than it did. Saying that clearly matters, because tea-price stories are often written for alarm (your cuppa under threat) when the real picture is the unremarkable one, a price story, not a shortage story, and conflating the two produces needless panic. See [will there be a shortage](#).

## What to do: buy on cost per cup

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](#). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for What to do: buy on cost per cup, Why Is Tea Getting More Expensive?. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/why-is-tea-getting-more-expensive/>*

Since the pressure is structural rather than about any one brand, the most effective response is the value lever this wiki keeps returning to. Judge by cost per cup, not pack price: a tea that looks dearer but uses less leaf and re-steeps can be cheaper per drink than a value tea binned bitter after one weak infusion. Buy loose leaf rather than bags, which strips out the per-bag packaging premium and the shipping of mostly air. Buy quantities you will drink while fresh, avoiding the false economy of a stale bulk bargain. And be willing to switch from a familiar premium box to an excellent less-famous tea. None of this reverses global commodity economics, but it materially softens the impact on your own cup. See [sustainable buying](#).

## How to read the next price-shock headline

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](#). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for How to read the next price-shock headline, Why Is Tea Getting More Expensive?. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/why-is-tea-getting-more-expensive/>*

It also helps to know how to read the next tea-price shock headline, because there will be one. Ask whether it describes a genuine supply collapse (rare) or the now-familiar mix of climate-hit harvests plus chain-wide cost inflation showing as price and pack-size changes (usual), and treat shrinkflation as the more likely mechanism than bare shelves. Separate the real signal, climate is a growing pressure on harvests and worth taking seriously, from the dramatised framing that you will not be able to buy tea next month.

## What to buy

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for What to buy, Why Is Tea Getting More Expensive?. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/why-is-tea-getting-more-expensive/*

Stretch value with [loose-leaf tea](#), which is usually cheaper per cup and re-steeps. For an everyday all-rounder buy [black tea](#) or browse the full [tea shop](#) and judge by the per-cup price.

## Reference noted

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Reference noted, Why Is Tea Getting More Expensive?. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/why-is-tea-getting-more-expensive/*

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

**FROM THE CURATOR** *teas* · One good loose-leaf in a clean teapot beats five exotic bags drunk in a hurry.

## More tea reading

- [Why is tea expensive in Canada](#)
- [How to save money on tea](#)
- [Is tea sustainable](#)
- [Loose leaf vs tea bags](#)

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for Why Is Tea Getting More Expensive?. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/why-is-tea-getting-more-expensive/*

## 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**

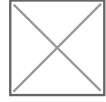
Welcome bonus + earn on every order.



**100 pts = 1 tree**

**Plant a tree in Scotland**

Pledge points to our reforestation partner.



Teas.co.uk · Tunbridge Wells, Kent · [hello@teas.co.uk](mailto:hello@teas.co.uk) · 3-click cancel at [teas.co.uk/cancel/](https://teas.co.uk/cancel/)