Cheapest Tea Per Cup: The Real Ranking

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Cheapest tea per cup, in summary:** Value and own-brand bag tea is usually cheapest per cup; re-steepable loose leaf can rival or beat premium bags; pods and sachets are the worst value. "Cheapest" answers cost, not enjoyment.

"What is the cheapest tea per cup?" has a slightly surprising answer. This sits in the value cluster beside cost per cup.

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

The blunt answer

Value or own-brand bag tea is usually the lowest cost per cup, by design, the point the own brand vs branded guide makes. But whole leaf you can steep again can close the gap or beat premium bags once you count the real extra infusions, the maths the re-steeping guide sets out, while single-use sachets, pods and novelty formats are usually the worst value because convenience is the priced-in premium. The instinctive assumption that loose leaf is automatically a luxury cost is often wrong once leaf weight per cup and re-steeping are accounted for, the point the is loose leaf cheaper guide proves.

Value per cup by format

Format	Typical value per cup
Value / own-brand bags	usually the lowest cost per cup, by design
Mainstream brand bags	a few pence more; the common "value sweet spot"
Re-steepable whole leaf	can rival or beat premium bags once re-steeps are counted
Single-use sachets / pods / novelty	usually the worst value; convenience is the premium

Where the money actually goes

Two factors swing the real figure far more than shelf price. The first is re-steeping, which turns good whole leaf into several teas for the price of one. The second is waste, which almost no buyer prices in: tea you bought and did not drink, because it went stale or you did not like it, has an effective cost per cup of infinity. That is why bulk buying only saves if the tea is stored airtight and drunk fresh, and why method and storage save more money than shopping ever does. Cheap, though, is not the same as nasty: a low cost everyday

tea can be thoroughly good, and “cheapest” and “acceptable” often overlap, the context the value tea guide gives.

The thirty-second check

The whole question reduces to something you can do on a product page in under a minute: take the price, divide by the cups the pack realistically makes, and for whole leaf multiply those cups by the re-steeps it gives, then judge that figure rather than the front-of-pack number. A box of bags is roughly its bag count; a loose leaf pouch is its weight divided by the leaf you use per cup, multiplied up for re-steeps. Add a share of any delivery cost online, and right-size the purchase to what you will finish fresh. Do not trust pack price or "per 100g", the same trust-the-numbers method the cost per cup guide and the wider cheapest tea UK page apply.

Premium, own brand and subscriptions

This is deliberately not a "never pay for good tea" position. Paying more can make sense when better whole leaf gives several steeps and tastes markedly better, beating premium bags on cost per cup and making a nicer drink as well, the case the is premium tea worth it guide weighs. Equally it can be pure markup, where packaging and prestige add price without adding to the cup, and the two are told apart by the arithmetic and a blind taste, not the price tag. Own brand is usually a smart, near-identical save, though a distinctive blend is harder to replicate, so "dupe" is a claim to blind-test, not assume. A subscription is a purchase of discovery and convenience, not the lowest cost per cup.

Common questions

What is cheapest per cup? Value or own-brand bags, by design. Re-steepable loose leaf can rival them once you count the extra infusions.

Are pods and sachets bad value? Usually the worst per cup. You are paying a real premium for the convenience and single-use format.

Is the cheapest tea any good? Often yes. Cheap does not have to mean nasty; an everyday bag at a low price can be thoroughly pleasant. This page answers cost, not enjoyment.

How do I actually compare? Convert everything to cost per cup, including re-steeps, and ignore pack price and "per 100g".

Buy the everyday winner on the cup

Run the cost-per-cup check across the English tea range, the loose leaf range or the full tea shop. Buy on the real per-cup figure rather than the front-of-pack price, and free UK delivery is over £35.

Browse the tea range

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · Count the pence per cup, not the price on the box. The dearer shelves are for when you have a reason to pay more.

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