Supermarket Tea Dupes: The Budget Tier Buying Guide

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Supermarket tea dupes, in summary:** Own-brand dupes work well for everyday builder and English Breakfast tea, where the brand premium is mostly marketing; they fall short on speciality and distinctive blends. Blind-test and compare cost per cup before you switch.

"Is the own brand a dupe for the famous one?" is a top value question. This sits in the value cluster beside cheapest tea per cup.

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

Where dupes work, and where they do not

Much everyday own-brand and branded tea is the same broad category of blended CTC, so "dupe" is often plausible, the point the own brand vs branded guide makes. For standard everyday black tea a good own brand can be a close, much cheaper match. Where they fall short is specific water-tuned blends and distinctive recipes, which are harder to replicate, the case the Yorkshire Tea page sets out, and real speciality tea (premium loose leaf, single origin, organic herbals) is a different category, not a dupe target at all. Dupes are an everyday-bag conversation, judged on a blind taste and cost per cup rather than the label.

At a glance

Aspect	Note
What dupes are	Cheaper supermarket equivalents of named everyday teas
Where they work	Builder tea and English Breakfast, near-equivalent at lower price
Where they fall short	Speciality, single-origin and distinctive blends; a real gap
Earl Grey caveat	Synthetic vs real bergamot oil is a meaningful character gap
Test method	Side-by-side blind taste with identical brewing
The read	A meaningful budget option for everyday tea

Specific dupe verdicts

Category by category, the reality varies. A Tesco Finest Strong against Yorkshire Tea is a roughly 70-80% blind match at around 30% less, a meaningful budget swap; a Sainsbury's Original Blend against PG Tips is

a similar reasonable swap. Twinings English Breakfast against an own-brand equivalent is a marginal swap, similar character at a slightly lower price. But Earl Grey is the classic exception: a cheap own brand often uses synthetic bergamot against Twinings' real bergamot oil, a meaningful character gap, so it is not a swap if Earl Grey quality matters to you. And there is no real supermarket equivalent for Yorkshire Gold or for proper speciality brands (Pukka, Clipper, Teapigs), where dupes simply do not exist at the supermarket tier, so stay with the original.

The cost-per-cup arithmetic

The numbers show where the saving is real. An 80-bag pack of Yorkshire Tea at around £3.50 is about 4.4p a bag; a Tesco Finest Strong 80-pack at around £2.50 is about 3.1p, roughly 30% cheaper; an Asda Smart Price 240-pack at around £1.50 is about 0.6p a bag, far cheaper but with a real quality compromise. Over a year, a three-cup-a-day household drinks roughly 1,100 cups: that is about £48 on Yorkshire, £34 on Tesco Finest, £7 on Smart Price, so a sensible dupe swap saves £14-40 a year. Premium and speciality tiers (Yorkshire Gold, Pukka) cost more per bag because the cup really differs, the lens the cost per cup guide applies, so the dupe question only really lives in the everyday tier.

How to taste-test a dupe

Blind testing is the only reliable way to assess a dupe, because it separates real difference from marketing impression, the standard the blind tasting guide sets out. Brew identical cups from dupe and original at identical leaf weight, water temperature, time and milk, then have someone else pour them into anonymous mugs labelled A and B. Sip both within 30 seconds, compare aroma, body and finish, and repeat across three different days because one-shot tests are unreliable. If you cannot reliably tell them apart over three tries, the dupe is functionally equivalent and the cheaper one wins.

When to pay the premium instead

Most households are best with a mix-and-match approach: a budget dupe for the morning builder cup, a better tea for the afternoon, and something special for the weekend, which controls daily cost while preserving the quality moments. Pay the premium when you drink one or two cups a day that deserve attention, value organic or Fairtrade credentials, enjoy the occasion, or are buying a gift, where the recipient cannot taste your saving. Stay budget when tea is mostly a background caffeine cup you drink several times a day and you really do not notice the difference. If unsure, run dupes for two or three months, then blind-test against the originals and let the result decide.

Common questions

Do supermarket dupes actually work? For everyday builder and English Breakfast tea, often yes, at a meaningful saving. For speciality and distinctive blends, usually not.

Which dupe is the weakest? Earl Grey, typically, because cheap versions use synthetic bergamot rather than real bergamot oil, which is easy to taste.

How much do I actually save? Roughly £14-40 a year for a three-cup-a-day household swapping a branded everyday tea for a good own brand.

How should I decide? Blind-test the dupe against the original at identical brewing across three days, and compare cost per cup. Trust the result, not the price.

Compare brands on the cup

Blind-test the named brands like Yorkshire Tea or PG Tips against your own-brand dupe, or browse the wider brand directory and the full tea shop. Dupe or original, judge it by the cup; delivery is free across the UK once you pass £35.

Browse the tea range

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teas · Start with the supermarket dupe and stay there until it lets you down. Most rich teas reward patience, not budget.

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