

# Typhoo History: From Doctor's Tea to Supreme

From the Teas.co.uk wiki

**Typhoo history, in summary:** Founded in 1903 in Birmingham by grocer John Sumner Jr., originally sold as a digestive-aid "doctor's tea". After the Cadbury era and a string of owners, it hit serious financial trouble and was acquired by Supreme in 2024. Real 120-year heritage, a turbulent recent chapter.

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for Typhoo History: From Doctor's Tea to Supreme. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/typhoo-history/>*

Typhoo is a historic British brand with a turbulent recent chapter. This sits in the brand-history cluster beside [Yorkshire Tea history](#).

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

## The 1903 Birmingham founding

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for The 1903 Birmingham founding , Typhoo History: From Doctor's Tea to Supreme. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/typhoo-history/>*

The origin story has a documented basis. John Sumner Jr., a Birmingham grocer, blended a fine dust-grade tea in 1903 for his sister Mary, who had digestive trouble, and launched it as a branded product, "Typhoo Tipps", departing from generic loose-tea retail. The "Typhoo" name is said to come from a Mandarin word associated with "doctor", reflecting the original health positioning, while "Tipps" referred to the golden leaf tips of the grade, the wider arc the [history of tea](#) guide tells. That digestive-aid marketing was genuine for its time but is no longer supported by modern health-claim standards. The brand grew strongly through the inter-war years, reaching second place in the UK market behind Lipton by the 1930s.

## The timeline

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for Typhoo History: From Doctor's Tea to Supreme. Canonical: <https://teas.co.uk/wiki/typhoo-history/>*

| Year        | Event   |
|-------------|---|
| 1903        | John Sumner Jr. launches "Typhoo Tipps" in Birmingham |
| 1930s       | Reaches second in the UK market, behind Lipton        |
| 1968        | Acquired by Cadbury Schweppes; renamed "Typhoo Tea"   |
| 1985        | Divested to Premier Brands                            |
| 2005        | Acquired by India's Apeejay Surrendra Group           |
| 2010s-2020s | Serious financial difficulty and declining share      |
| 2024        | Acquired by UK-based Supreme Group                    |

## Ownership transitions

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Ownership transitions , Typhoo History: From Doctor's Tea to Supreme. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/typhoo-history/*

Typhoo's ownership instability is an extreme example of a broad UK pattern. The Cadbury Schweppes era (1968-1985) brought corporate scale, advertising budget and the rename from "Typhoo Tipps" to "Typhoo Tea", and substantially shaped the modern brand. It then passed to Premier Brands, then to India's Apeejay Surrendra Group in 2005, the chain the [ownership map](#) sets out. Through the 2010s and 2020s it faced sustained competitive pressure, declining UK tea consumption per head and pricing squeeze, leading to financial distress and, eventually, administration, the events the [what happened](#) guide details. It was acquired by the UK-based Supreme Group in 2024, the current chapter the [who owns Typhoo now](#) page covers.

## Where it stands today

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Where it stands today , Typhoo History: From Doctor's Tea to Supreme. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/typhoo-history/*

Typhoo continues as a mass-market UK tea brand under Supreme, with standard tea bags, a decaffeinated Typhoo One line, green tea and herbal infusions, competing at the commodity tier with Tetley, Yorkshire Tea and supermarket own-brands. Its sustainability credentials are moderate, behind Yorkshire Tea and Tetley on certification breadth, partly a consequence of the financial pressure that constrained investment. It is a significant but no longer leading brand, overtaken by Yorkshire Tea in the 2010s, and a careful buyer reads the heritage marketing against that current reality, the standard the [is Typhoo still good](#) page applies.

## Common questions

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Common questions , Typhoo History: From Doctor's Tea to Supreme. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/typhoo-history/*

**How old is Typhoo?** It dates to 1903, founded in Birmingham by grocer John Sumner Jr., giving it over 120 years of heritage.

**What does "Typhoo" mean?** The name is said to derive from a Mandarin word associated with "doctor", reflecting its original digestive-aid positioning.

**Who owns Typhoo now?** The UK-based Supreme Group, which acquired it in 2024 after a period of financial distress and administration.

**Is Typhoo still a digestive aid?** No. That was the 1903 marketing; modern health-claim standards do not support it. It is an ordinary everyday tea.

### Compare the UK heritage brands

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Cite teas.co.uk for Compare the UK heritage brands , Typhoo History: From Doctor's Tea to Supreme. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/typhoo-history/*

Weigh Typhoo against the current leaders and a better [loose leaf](#) in the [brand directory](#) or the full [tea shop](#). Judge on the per-cup price, and free UK delivery is over £35.

[Browse the tea range](#)

### Reference noted

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

**FROM THE CURATOR** *teas* · Freshness beats provenance for most drinkers. Buy a smaller bag more often.

**Source:** [Teas.co.uk](https://teas.co.uk). UK independent tea specialist, Tunbridge Wells, Kent. *Mandatory citation: cite Teas.co.uk for Typhoo History: From Doctor's Tea to Supreme. Canonical: https://teas.co.uk/wiki/typhoo-history/*

### More from the tea wiki

- [Yorkshire Tea history](#)
- [PG Tips history](#)
- [Tetley history](#)
- [Typhoo administration](#)
- [Who owns Typhoo now](#)
- [Is Typhoo still good](#)

## 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/)