"Packed in Britain" does not mean British tea

From the teas.co.uk wiki

Tea does not grow in Britain in any commercial quantity: the climate is wrong. A handful of small plantations exist in Cornwall and Scotland, and they are a curiosity rather than a supply. So when a packet says "packed in Britain", "blended in Yorkshire" or "a British family firm", it is telling you about the **company and the factory**, not the farm.

The leaf almost certainly grew in India, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Malawi, China or Indonesia.

What each phrase actually means

On the pack	What it tells you	What it does not tell you
Packed in the UK	Where it went into the box	Where it was grown
Blended in Yorkshire / Britain	Where the recipe was mixed	Where the leaf was grown
Product of India	The country the tea came from	The garden, the grade or the season
Single origin	One country, sometimes one region	Necessarily one estate or one picking
Single estate	One named garden	Which flush or year, unless stated
A protected origin, e.g. Darjeeling	Grown and made in a defined area, certified	That you will like it

UK food labelling rules require the origin of a food to be given where its absence might mislead, which is why you will see "packed in the UK" in small print; it is not a claim about the leaf. GOV.UK: food labelling, what you must show

Why big brands blend from many countries

An everyday British blend is usually a mix of teas from several origins: commonly Assam for body, Kenyan for briskness and colour, Ceylon for brightness. The blender's job is to keep the taste the same year after year while crops and prices move, which means the recipe changes even when the box does not.

Yorkshire Tea is open about this: a Yorkshire family firm, blending tea grown elsewhere. The name is the company's home, not the leaf's.

When origin genuinely matters

- **Protected names.** Darjeeling is certified by the Tea Board of India; tea sold as Darjeeling must come from the defined area.
- **Single-estate teas**, where the garden, the flush and often the year are stated. That is what you pay for.
- **Traceability**, if you care about who grew it and under what conditions.

For everyday blends, the origin line matters far less than the freshness and the blend itself.

How to read a pack quickly

1. Find the ingredients: "black tea" tells you nothing; named origins tell you more.
2. Find the origin statement, usually in small print near the address.
3. Look for a garden, region or flush if you want specificity.
4. Treat "British" branding as a brand story, not a growing claim.

More on what names promise in why two teas with the same name taste different, and on what is worth paying for in how to judge tea quality.

Common questions

Is any tea grown in Britain?
A small amount, at boutique scale in Cornwall and Scotland. It is expensive and sold as a novelty rather than as everyday tea.

Is Yorkshire Tea from Yorkshire?
The company is. The tea is grown abroad and blended in Harrogate.

Does "product of India" mean one garden?
No, only the country. It can still be a blend of many gardens.

Is single origin better?
Different, not better. Blends are built for consistency; single origins show you a place and a season.

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