Best loose leaf tea UK

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Loose leaf, in summary:** The loose leaf teas we sell, what each works out at per cup, the well known loose leaf we do not stock, and the minimal kit.

Last reviewed by the teas.co.uk team in April 2026. Picks and cost figures checked against our shelf on 18 September 2026.

The loose leaf tea on our shelf includes PG Tips Original 250g at about 3.6p a cup, Yorkshire Tea Original 250g at about 4.8p, Yorkshire Tea Gold 250g at about 5.4p and Dilmah Ceylon Pure Green 100g at about 12.8p, and now Twinings English Breakfast, Assam and Earl Grey loose too. For an everyday British black blend that is about the same as the same tea in bags, not dearer. This guide lists what we stock, the well known loose leaf we do not, the cost per cup maths behind those figures, and the minimal kit.

Loose leaf is worth the swap for two plain reasons: whole leaves rather than the fannings and dust in most bags, so more of the leaf character survives into the cup, and re infusion, because one measure of good leaf gives two to five useful infusions in a teapot where a bag gives one. What loose leaf actually is, and how it differs from a tea bag, is set out on what loose leaf tea is and how it differs from a bag. Loose leaf is widely sold in the UK, from classic British black blends by Twinings and Yorkshire to specialist greens, oolongs and herbals.

The loose leaf we sell, and what we don't

Every loose leaf tea on our shelf, most bought first:

Loose leaf on our shelf

- Yorkshire Tea Original Loose Leaf Tea, 250g
- Yorkshire Tea Gold Blend Loose Leaf Tea, 250g
- Dilmah Ceylon Pure Green Loose Leaf Tea, 100g
- PG Tips Original Loose Leaf Tea, 250g
- Twinings English Breakfast Loose Tea, 125g
- Taylors of Harrogate Yorkshire Tea Loose Leaf Tea, 250g
- Twinings Assam Loose Tea, 125g

- Twinings Loose Leaf Earl Grey Tea, 125g

Well-known loose leaf we don't sell

- Specialist loose green, oolong, pu erh and white teas, and loose herbal ranges such as Dragonfly and Pukka

Whole leaf in a bag, from our shelf

- Teapigs Mao Feng Green Tea, 15 Tea Bags, premium Chinese green; whole leaves in pyramid bags, sweet vegetal cup
- Teapigs Silver Tips White Tea, 15 Tea Bags, a gentle white tea in pyramid bags
- Twinings Jasmine Green Tea, 20 Tea Bags, scented Chinese green in bags

Brewing loose leaf properly

The full method is in the loose leaf brewing guide. The short version:

- **Black tea:** 1 heaped tsp per cup (about 2.5g if you weigh it; spoonfuls vary), 100°C, 3 to 4 minutes.
- **Green tea:** 1 heaped tsp per cup, 70°C to 80°C, 2 minutes.
- **White tea:** 1 heaped tsp per cup, 85°C, 4 to 5 minutes.
- **Oolong:** 1 heaped tsp per cup, 85°C to 90°C, 3 minutes; 4 to 5 infusions per measure.
- **Pu erh:** 100°C, rinse the leaves with a 5-second hot rinse first, then 30-second initial infusion, increasing 30 seconds per re infusion.
- **Herbal:** 100°C, 5 to 7 minutes (most herbs are slow extractors); see the herbal and fruit infusions guide.

The cost per cup maths

Loose leaf is dosed by weight, so the maths needs a stated dose. At 2.5g of black tea per mug (weighed), a 250g pack makes about 100 cups: PG Tips Original Loose Leaf at £3.60 is about 3.6p a cup, Yorkshire Tea Original Loose Leaf at £4.80 about 4.8p and Yorkshire Gold Loose Leaf at £5.40 about 5.4p. At 2g of green tea a cup, Dilmah Ceylon Pure Green Loose Leaf (100g, £6.40) makes about 50 cups, about 12.8p a cup before any re infusion. For comparison, Yorkshire Tea Original in bags is 4.5p a bag (£3.60 for 80). These are our autumn sale prices on 18 September 2026 (the sale ends 15 November); each product page shows today's price.

So loose leaf is not automatically cheaper for an everyday British blend; it is about the same. Where it pulls ahead is green and oolong leaf that gives two or more good infusions from one measure, and in cup quality at any given price point.

The kit you need

Item	Why	Workable substitute

Teapot with built in strainer	The simplest way to brew loose leaf properly	A regular teapot + a tea strainer when pouring
Mug infuser basket	For single cup brewing without a teapot	A loose tea ball is fine for stronger black tea; less good for green
Kettle with temperature control	Different teas want different temperatures	A kitchen thermometer. How fast boiled water cools depends on the amount of water, the kettle or jug and the room, so there is no fixed wait
Kitchen scale or 1-tsp measure	Loose tea is dosed by weight; consistency matters	A teaspoon measure; spoonfuls vary with leaf size, so weigh when you can

Sensible caveats

- **The convenience gap is real.** A bag is quicker to make and to clear up; loose leaf needs a pot or infuser and a little more time. For a hurried morning, the bag wins. Loose leaf suits the cups you have time for.
- **Storage matters more for loose leaf.** Keep in airtight tins, away from light and strong smells; tea absorbs odours from the cupboard. Once opened, use a pouch within a few months for the best flavour.
- **Strainers, not balls, for green and white.** Tea balls don't give the leaves room to expand, particularly for the larger leaf greens and whites. A basket style infuser or proper teapot is meaningfully better.
- **Don't buy 500g of an unknown loose leaf.** Always start with the 100g size to test the cup; the price per gram on bigger pouches is only useful if you'll actually drink the tea.
- **A few tea bags are excellent.** Teapigs pyramid temples contain whole leaves and are essentially loose leaf in a bag. The bag vs loose distinction collapses for premium pyramid brands.

Related reading: the loose vs tea bags, the brewing loose leaf tea guide, the ideal water temperatures, the best British tea bags UK, and the teapots and infusers guide.

Quick take

Loose leaf is a real step up in cup quality: whole leaves rather than dust and fannings, two to five infusions per measure, and better value per cup once re infusion is counted. The kit is minimal, a pot or a basket infuser and water at the right temperature, black at a full boil for three to four minutes, green cooler at 70C to 80C for two. Bags are undeniably more convenient, so keep both: bags for the rushed cup, loose leaf for the unhurried one. Premium pyramid brands like Teapigs blur the line because they are essentially loose leaf in a bag.

Start loose leaf: a British black cup from PG Tips or Yorkshire Tea loose leaf, or green from Dilmah Ceylon Pure Green. Browse the full loose leaf range.

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · A clean pot and a single good loose leaf will outdo five fancy bags gulped on the run.

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