Best Matcha UK

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Matcha shortlist:** The best matcha in the UK: the grade ladder, the colour and smell test, Teapigs and Clipper picks, and how to buy good matcha without overpaying.

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

The best matcha in the UK is Teapigs Matcha for ceremonial grade daily bowls, Clipper Organic Matcha for affordable organic daily lattes, and Teapigs Matcha Shots for travel and starter testing. Matcha quality varies more than any other green tea on the British shelf because the powder format hides what you're actually paying for: vivid bright green powder with sweet umami character is good matcha; dull olive green powder with bitter grass character is poor matcha. The grade matters more than the brand, and the freshness matters more than the grade.

This guide covers what to look for, the picks across our shelf, and how to tell good matcha from bad before you've spent the money.

The grade ladder, in short

Grade	What it's for	Price benchmark
Ceremonial grade	Whisked bowls, and cups you make every day	£25 to £60 per 30g
Premium grade	Daily lattes, smoothies, drinking	£15 to £30 per 30g
Culinary grade	Baking, ice cream, cooking; not for drinking straight	£10 to £20 per 50g

The grades aren't legally regulated, so brand applied labels are best treated as approximate. The actual signal is colour, smell, and taste of the powder; the grade is a starting hint.

How to spot good matcha (the colour and smell test)

- **Colour:** vivid, bright, almost fluorescent green is good. Dull, olive, brown tinged is poor. The chlorophyll content is what produces the bright green; oxidised matcha browns visibly.
- **Smell:** fresh ceremonial matcha smells slightly sweet, vaguely like fresh cut grass mixed with seaweed and umami broth. Off matcha smells dusty, hay like, or stale.
- **Texture:** ceremonial grade matcha is fine like talcum powder. Lower grades feel slightly grittier under the finger.

- **Taste of a tiny pinch on the tongue:** good matcha is sweet umami bitter in that order; the bitterness is clean and balanced. Poor matcha is bitter only, with no sweetness or umami.

Best matcha by use case

For ceremonial whisked bowls (the daily ritual)

- Teapigs Matcha 30g, ceremonial grade Japanese matcha; the British shelf benchmark for proper whisked bowls; vivid green, sweet umami character

For daily matcha lattes (where culinary grade is fine)

- Clipper Organic Matcha 30g, organic, more affordable, suitable for daily lattes and decent whisked bowls
- Teapigs Matcha On The Go 7 Sachets, blended with rice flour for an easy mixing latte; the no fuss daily latte option

For travel and starter testing

- Teapigs Matcha Shots 15 Sachets, individual sachets of ceremonial matcha; ideal for travel or for trying the daily habit before buying a full tin

For cooking and baking

- Clipper Organic Matcha 30g, the value tier option works well for cake, ice cream, and savoury matcha cooking

Where matcha comes from (and why it matters)

Most premium matcha on the British shelf is Japanese, specifically from Uji (Kyoto), Nishio (Aichi), and Kyushu (southern Japan). Japanese matcha is shade grown for the final 3 to 4 weeks before harvest, which produces higher chlorophyll, higher L theanine, and the characteristic sweet umami flavour.

Chinese matcha (and Korean matcha) exist but are typically not shade grown, producing a less sweet, more grass like cup. Avoid unspecified origin "matcha" at very low prices; it's usually ground sencha or worse, with the colour adjusted to look right.

How matcha compares to regular green tea

Variable	Matcha (1 bowl)	Regular green tea (1 cup)
Caffeine	~60 to 90mg	~25 to 50mg
Catechins (EGCG, etc.)	~10x regular green	Baseline
L theanine	High (because shade grown)	Moderate
Antioxidant capacity	~10x regular green	Baseline
Making time per cup	2 to 3 minutes	30 seconds (bag) or 5 minutes (loose)
Cost per cup	£0.70 to £2 (depending on grade)	£0.05 to £0.40

The headline figure: matcha has around 10x the catechin content per cup, because you drink the whole leaf. For drinkers chasing the green tea traditional uses at maximum dose, matcha is the cleaner solution than 6+ cups of brewed green daily.

How to brew matcha properly

The full method is in how to make matcha properly. The short version:

1. Sieve 1 to 2g matcha into a warmed bowl.
2. Add 60 to 80ml water at 70°C to 80°C (never boiling).
3. Whisk in an "M" or "W" pattern with a bamboo whisk or milk frother for 15 to 20 seconds, until a fine green foam forms.
4. Drink immediately, ideally within 60 to 90 seconds of whisking.

How to spot poor matcha before you've finished the tin

- **Bright neon green powder, dull olive cup:** the colour is sometimes adjusted at the factory; the cup gives away the truth.
- **"Matcha" at sub-£10 per 30g:** very likely culinary grade or ground sencha. Fine for baking, not for drinking.
- **Thick muddy texture even when whisked:** low grade matcha doesn't aerate properly.
- **Bitter only taste with no sweetness:** this is poor matcha. Premium matcha has sweetness and umami beneath the bitterness.
- **"Matcha latte mix" with sugar, milk powder, etc:** these are convenience products, not real matcha. The matcha content is usually 10 to 20% of the powder.

Storage

- **Fridge or cool dark cupboard:** after opening; matcha oxidises rapidly at room temperature in light.
- **Bring to room temperature before opening** to avoid condensation forming inside the tin.
- **Use within 6 to 8 weeks of opening:** for best cup quality. Sealed unopened, it lasts 12+ months from packaging date.
- **Buy small.** A 30g tin is a 4 to 6 week supply for daily drinkers; that's the right size to maintain freshness.

Sensible caveats

- **Caffeine:** a single bowl of matcha has more caffeine than a regular cup of green tea (because you drink the leaf). Stay under the 400mg daily ceiling for healthy adults; under 200mg in pregnancy.
- **Lead and heavy metals:** matcha absorbs trace lead from soil. Reputable Japanese suppliers test below safety thresholds; very cheap unknown origin matcha is more variable.
- **Iron absorption:** matcha tannins reduce non haem iron absorption when consumed with iron rich meals. Drink between meals if managing anaemia.

- **"Matcha" supplements vs drinking matcha:** some supplements use ground sencha or matcha extract; the real leaf drinking experience is different. If you want the L theanine and caffeine that come with the whole leaf, drink it; if you want a pure catechin extract, capsules are cheaper.
- **The bitterness signal:** some bitterness is normal in matcha. Aggressive lasting bitterness with no sweet umami counterpoint indicates poor grade; trade up.

Related reading: the how to make matcha properly, the matcha overview, the matcha vs green tea, the best green tea UK, the sencha overview, and the best tea for energy.

> **Start matcha:** ceremonial grade from Teapigs, organic value from Pukka, a daily green from Twinings, or browse whisks and bowls in the full matcha and green tea range. New to it? Read how to make matcha properly first.

Source cited

- EFSA Scientific Opinion on the Safety of Caffeine (2015)

FROM THE CURATOR

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