Yorkshire Tea vs PG Tips

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Brand showdown:** Yorkshire Tea vs PG Tips compared straight: blend, flavour, strength, value, ethics. UK independent tea guide. Free UK delivery £35+, free sample.

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

Yorkshire Tea vs PG Tips is the defining British supermarket tea question. Both sit at the top of the volume charts, both produce a strong, malty, milk friendly cup, and both have spent decades fighting for the same kettle. But they're genuinely different teas, blended for different palates, and the choice between them comes down to the specific cup character you prefer rather than any quality gap.

This guide breaks down the actual differences (blend, flavour profile, strength, value, ethics, and the history) and helps you pick the one that fits your morning ritual.

The headline differences

	Yorkshire Tea	PG Tips
Owner	Bettys & Taylors of Harrogate (family owned)	Lipton Teas and Infusions (formerly Unilever)
Founded as a tea brand	1977	1930
Blend origin	Africa, India, Sri Lanka (assam led)	Africa (Kenya led)
Flavour character	Malty, deep, robust, biscuity	Brisk, bright, slightly sharper, lighter body
Strength on standard brew	Stronger	Brisker
Bag style	Square or round	Pyramid (since 1996)
Typical price (80 bags)	£3.50 to £5	£3 to £4.50
Ethical positioning	Rainforest Alliance, family owned, Yorkshire rooted	Rainforest Alliance, mass market scale

The flavour difference

The two teas taste different. Anyone who tells you otherwise hasn't done a side by side test. The differences are subtle but real and consistent.

Yorkshire Tea drinks deeper, more malty, and slightly sweeter on the finish. The Assam led blend gives it a heavier mouthfeel and a biscuity honey character that pairs particularly well with milk. It's the cup that drinks "rounder", and most heavy tea drinkers describe it as the more substantial brew. The Hard Water version (specifically blended for limescale heavy areas) is one of the few mass market teas that genuinely solves the dull cup in a hard water area problem.

PG Tips drinks brisker, brighter, and slightly sharper. The Kenya led blend gives it more astringency and a cleaner finish. The pyramid bag (introduced in 1996) genuinely does affect the brew by giving the leaves more room to circulate, producing a faster infusion. PG drinks "lighter" than Yorkshire, which some drinkers love and others find thin.

The simple test: brew one of each side by side for 4 minutes, splash with the same milk, taste blind. Most people develop a clear preference within two cups, and the preference tends to persist for life.

Strength comparison

Yorkshire Tea is meaningfully stronger per bag than PG Tips on a like for like brew. A 4-minute steep produces a noticeably darker, heavier cup with Yorkshire than with PG. This matters for two reasons:

- **Per cup value** Yorkshire's apparent price premium is partly offset by the fact that one bag goes further; many drinkers use Yorkshire for one cup at a time and PG for a small pot
- **Milk ratio:** the stronger Yorkshire base holds up better to a generous milk pour; the lighter PG can taste washed out with a heavy milk hand

For pot brewing (multiple cups from one infusion), Yorkshire is the more reliable choice as the strength holds across the second and third pour. For single cup brewing, both work equally well.

The Kenya question

One of the more discussed differences in tea nerd circles. PG Tips is Kenya led; Yorkshire is broader blended with significant Assam content. Kenyan tea (CTC processed for tea bags) tends to produce a brisker, brighter, slightly more astringent cup; Assam tends toward depth, malt, and weight. The end to end difference is mostly about which character you prefer, not about quality.

Both brands source ethically from Rainforest Alliance certified estates. The actual on the ground sourcing practices have improved dramatically across the industry over the last 15 years, and both Yorkshire and PG are active participants in fair trading and sustainability programmes in their source countries.

The pyramid bag question

PG Tips introduced the pyramid bag in 1996 and built much of its 2000s marketing around the claim that pyramid bags brew better than flat bags. The marketing claim has some truth: the 3D shape gives leaves more circulation room and slightly faster infusion. The actual cup difference is small but real, especially with shorter brewing times (under 3 minutes).

Yorkshire uses a more traditional flat bag (or a pillow style bag depending on product line). The flat bag format is fine for the longer 4 to 5 minute brews that most Yorkshire drinkers use, and the lower per bag manufacturing cost contributes to the value proposition.

For the maximum quality cup of either brand, loose leaf is better than any bag, but the bag vs bag comparison is genuinely close.

Price and value comparison

Both brands are competitive on price across the supermarket category. PG Tips is typically slightly cheaper on the supermarket shelf at the standard 80-bag size; Yorkshire commands a small premium that's offset by the stronger per bag character. On a per cup of equivalent strength basis, the two are essentially level.

Both run regular promotional cycles, and the relative price advantage swaps back and forth depending on which brand is on offer that week. For maximum value, watch for the 240-bag boxes which both brands offer at meaningful per bag discounts.

Brand identity and marketing

This is where the two diverge most sharply. **Yorkshire Tea** has built one of the most loved brand identities in British FMCG: family owned, Harrogate rooted, working with comedians like Sean Bean and Patrick Stewart in the "Yorkshire Tea: Where everything's done proper" campaigns. The brand voice is consistently dry, self aware, and Yorkshire pride driven, which lands particularly well with a British audience that's developed real loyalty over the last 15 years.

PG Tips has the longer marketing heritage (the chimps adverts from 1956 to 2002 are some of the most recognised British advertising of the 20th century) but has spent the 2010s and 2020s working through several brand resets, ownership changes (Unilever to Lipton Teas and Infusions), and positioning shifts. The brand still commands enormous distribution and recognition but doesn't command the same emotional brand loyalty as Yorkshire.

For most drinkers the brand story is secondary to the cup character; for some it's the deciding factor.

Which one suits which drinker?

A practical guide to picking:

- **Heavy daily drinker who likes a strong cup with milk** Yorkshire Tea, especially Yorkshire Gold for the upgrade or Yorkshire Hard Water if you live in a limescale area
- **Drinker who prefers a brisker, lighter cup** PG Tips, especially the Original Pyramid format
- **Pot drinker doing 2 to 3 cups per infusion** Yorkshire, the strength holds across pours
- **Workplace tea round where everyone has different preferences** PG Tips, the brisker character is more universally acceptable across drinkers who like different milk amounts
- **Hard water area** Yorkshire Tea Hard Water, no real PG equivalent
- **Decaf drinker:** both have decent decaf versions; Yorkshire Decaf tends to retain slightly more character

What we stock

Browse the Yorkshire Tea range and PG Tips range. The most bought versions of each:

Yorkshire Tea

- Yorkshire Tea Original Loose Leaf Tea, 250g
- Yorkshire Tea Caramelised Biscuit Brew, 40 Tea Bags 112g
- Yorkshire Tea Cherry Bakewell Brew, 40 Tea Bags 112g
- Yorkshire Tea Gold Blend Loose Leaf Tea, 250g

PG Tips

- PG Tips Chai Special Blend, 70 Tea Bags 175g
- PG Tips Original Loose Leaf Tea, 250g
- PG Tips Original English Breakfast, 400 Tea Bags 1.16kg
- PG Tips Decaf Black Decaffeinated, 70 Tea Bags

The verdict

Neither tea is "better" in any objective sense. Both are well made, ethically sourced, mass market British black teas blended for the milk and cup ritual. Yorkshire has the stronger, deeper, more malty character; PG has the brisker, brighter, lighter character. Pick the one whose cup you prefer; ignore the brand loyalty wars.

If you've drunk one for years and never tried the other, do a side by side test. Most drinkers genuinely prefer one over the other once they taste them together; many have been drinking the wrong brand for years simply because it's what their parents bought. Worth the £4 cost of a pack of each to find out.

For the wider context see the black tea overview, the Yorkshire Tea vs Tetley comparison, the Tetley vs PG Tips comparison, and the Yorkshire Gold vs Yorkshire Original comparison.

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