Best Tea Brands UK

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Best UK tea brands, in summary:** The best tea brands in the UK ranked by category: everyday black, premium loose leaf, herbal, green and value, with the overall pick and the names worth knowing.

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

The best tea brands in the UK are Yorkshire Tea overall, Pukka for herbal, Whittard and Teapigs for premium loose leaf and Hyson for value, ranked here by an independent specialist who stocks 110 brands and watches what customers actually buy. No sponsored lists, no industry kickbacks, no SEO bait padding. Five categories, three brands per category, and one overall pick. Updated for 2026.

The categories

"Best brand" depends on what you ask. We split the question five ways:

1. Best everyday black tea brand (the one you'd buy 80 bags of)
2. Best premium / loose leaf brand
3. Best herbal & organic brand
4. Best green tea brand
5. Best value brand (best cup per pound)

1. Best everyday black tea brand

1. **Yorkshire Tea (Taylors of Harrogate).** Family owned since 1886, Rainforest Alliance certified, possibly the UK's best loved everyday cup. Original is the workhorse, Gold the upgrade, Hard Water the regional specialist. **Overall winner if I had to pick one.**
2. **PG Tips.** Brisker, Kenyan led blend; the pyramid bag does its job.
3. **Twinings.** 318 years of blending experience and the consistency shows. More refined; lighter than Yorkshire.

2. Best premium / loose leaf brand

1. **Whittard of Chelsea.** Single estate Darjeeling, Sencha, Earl Grey loose, hot chocolate. Premium high street tea since 1886.
2. **Teapigs.** Whole leaf in pyramid bags. The quality bridge between supermarket and proper loose leaf.
3. **Williamson Tea.** Direct source from their own Kenyan estates. Single origin specialists.

3. Best herbal & organic brand

1. **Pukka.** Bristol founded 2001, entirely organic, the British apothecary aesthetic. Night Time, Three Mint, Three Chamomile, Elderberry & Echinacea, all benchmarks.
2. **Yogi Tea.** American, founded by a yoga teacher 1969, broader range including chai variants.
3. **Clipper Teas.** British organic pioneer since 1984. Ethical, Fairtrade, well priced.

4. Best green tea brand

1. **Teapigs:** for whole leaf bagged Mao Feng.
2. **Pukka:** for matcha and matcha blends.
3. **Tetley:** for everyday £0.06-per cup green at the supermarket benchmark.

5. Best value brand

1. **Hyson.** Premium Breakfast at £0.05 per cup punches well above its price. The discovery pick.
2. **Tetley.** The lighter, Ceylon led everyday mainstay and the supermarket benchmark for value. £0.04 per cup. Clear cup.
3. **Yorkshire Tea** at £0.06 per cup is the value meets quality sweet spot.

Brands worth knowing that don't fit a top-3

- **Dragonfly Tea.** Niche premium herbal & rooibos specialist. Earl Grey Rooibos is brilliant.
- **Glengettie.** Welsh tea brand, niche, family owned, properly strong.
- **Typhoo.** Pioneered the tea bag in Britain in 1953. Still solid everyday black.
- **True English Tea (T.E.T.).** Distinctive British blends.
- **Birchall.** British family owned, mid premium pricing.
- **Tropical Sun, Dalgety.** Caribbean teas, diaspora range no other UK e commerce carries.
- **Cotterley, Rochambeau, Tiséa.** French imports unavailable in UK supermarkets.

The specialists worth buying from

The five categories above cover the brands most people actually buy. These are the specialists behind the picks in "Which brand for which tea" below: single origin Ceylon, and the Chinese and Japanese houses the supermarket aisle never shows.

Single origin Ceylon

- **Dilmah.** Sri Lankan and family owned, single origin Ceylon, founded in 1988 by Merrill Fernando.
- **Hyson.** Sri Lankan estate brand; single origin Ceylon at accessible prices, which is why it takes the value category above.

Specialist Chinese tea

- **Mei Leaf (London).** The UK's leading Chinese specialty tea retailer; a wide premium range across green, oolong, pu erh, white and yellow.
- **Postcard Teas (London).** Smaller batch premium specialist, with strong relationships with named producers.
- **What Cha (online).** A wide single origin range on rotating premium inventory.

Specialist Japanese tea

- **Clearspring.** The UK organic Japanese specialist: sencha, hojicha, genmaicha and matcha, all organic.
- **Direct Japanese imports.** Naoki, Ippodo and Marukyu Koyamaen at the premium end.

Which brand for which tea

The categories above answer the everyday question. These are the picks once you are shopping for one specific tea rather than a house brand.

- **Earl Grey.** Twinings is the benchmark, Hyson the refined one, Pukka Lavender Earl Grey the specialty.
- **Chai.** Tetley Masala for mainstream, Pukka Vanilla Chai for organic, Drink Me Chai in sachet form.
- **Oolong.** Mei Leaf, Postcard Teas and What Cha are the three specialists to know.
- **Pu erh.** Mei Leaf, What Cha and specialist Chinese imports.
- **Matcha.** Clearspring for organic and accessible, direct Japanese (Naoki, Ippodo) for premium.
- **Caffeine free.** Pukka After Dinner, Pukka Three Mint and Dragonfly Pure Rooibos.

Match the brand to the budget

- **Budget.** Tetley and supermarket own label.
- **Mid.** Yorkshire, PG Tips, Pukka, Clipper.
- **Premium.** Dilmah, Whittard.
- **Specialist premium.** Mei Leaf, Postcard Teas and What Cha.

Overall pick

If I had to name one UK tea brand: Yorkshire Tea (Taylors of Harrogate). The Original takes milk, the Gold steps up for occasions, the Decaf tastes nearest to its caffeinated parent of any UK decaf, and the Bedtime Brew is a good one. Family owned, no gimmicks, consistent year on year. Quick Buy: Yorkshire Tea Original 80s.

FAQ

What is the best tea brand in the UK 2026? Yorkshire Tea overall, Pukka for herbal, Whittard for premium loose leaf, Hyson for value.

Most popular tea brand UK? By volume, PG Tips and Tetley have historically led. By preference surveys, Yorkshire Tea is now the most loved.

Best British owned tea brand? Yorkshire Tea (Taylors of Harrogate, family owned since 1886, still independent). Many other brands are owned by global conglomerates.

Best ethical tea brand UK? Pukka (organic and Fair for Life, though no longer a B Corp since 2024), Clipper (Fairtrade since 1994), Yorkshire Tea (Rainforest Alliance), Williamson (direct source).

Curator's note: this list reflects what customers buy and what we'd buy ourselves. Yorkshire wins because it does the everyday cup better than the everyday cup is normally done. Pukka wins herbals because its leaf quality is clearly above the supermarket alternatives. Lee, teas.co.uk, Tunbridge Wells.

The brands at a glance

Category	The pick	Why
Everyday black	Yorkshire Tea	Family owned since 1886, the most loved everyday cup; overall winner
Premium / loose leaf	Whittard, Teapigs, Williamson	Single estate and whole leaf, the quality bridge above supermarket
Herbal and organic	Pukka	Entirely organic, with leaf quality clearly above supermarket herbals
Green tea	Teapigs (bagged), Pukka (matcha)	Whole leaf Mao Feng and proper matcha
Value	Hyson, Tetley	Hyson Premium Breakfast punches well above its price per cup

Ethics and the smaller names

Once cup quality is settled, the ethical badges are what separate the picks, and the credible ones are real rather than decorative: Pukka on organic and Fair for Life, though it lost its B Corp accreditation in 2024 after moving into Lipton; Clipper as the Fairtrade pioneer since 1994; Yorkshire on Rainforest Alliance; Williamson on direct estate sourcing. Beyond the top tier sit the brands the big aisles ignore but a specialist should not, Dragonfly for niche herbal and rooibos, Glengettie for properly strong Welsh black, Typhoo which pioneered the British tea bag, and the diaspora and French imports such as Tropical Sun, Dalgety, Cotterley and Rochambeau that no supermarket carries. Who owns which brand, where the leaf is actually grown and the names beyond the supermarket aisle are set out in British tea brands compared.

The brand stories, head to heads and founders

Ranking the brands is one job; knowing what each one actually is, is another. The heritage names have their own pages here: Yorkshire Tea, Twinings, PG Tips and Tetley, with the detail people actually search:

Yorkshire Gold vs Original, the PG Tips pyramid bag story and the origin of Earl Grey.

The quality led challengers: Pukka and what its organic badge means, and the B Corp status it lost, Teapigs and the truth about tea temples, Dragonfly, and Clipper, Fairtrade and unbleached bags. The head to heads people actually ask for: Tetley vs PG Tips and Pukka vs Teapigs.

A neutral wiki credits the people who built them: Thomas Twining, Sir Thomas Lipton, Bruce Ginsberg of Dragonfly, Pole and Westwell of Pukka and Kilby and Cheadle of Teapigs.

Read the market as three stories. The heritage giants, Yorkshire, Twinings, PG Tips and Tetley, sell strength, consistency, scale and a low price per cup. The quality led challengers, Pukka, Teapigs, Dragonfly and Clipper, sell organic, leaf in a bag and Fairtrade. The founders are why the cup still tastes the way it does. The ownership detail, which famous names now sit inside larger groups, is in the ownership and ethics section above.

Quick take

If you must name one UK tea brand it is Yorkshire Tea: family owned, consistent, strong on the everyday cup, decaf and bedtime. Pukka leads herbal infusions, Whittard and Teapigs the premium loose leaf step, Hyson the value upset, Clipper the ethical organic pick. Most popular by volume is still PG Tips and Tetley; most loved by preference is Yorkshire. Choose by the job, everyday, premium, herbal, green, value, not by the marketing. For the bag by bag detail see the best British tea bags guide.

> **Shop the picks:** the overall winner from Yorkshire Tea, herbal from Pukka, premium whole leaf from Teapigs, value from Hyson. Browse the full teas.co.uk shop.

Related on the wiki: Tea buying guide.

FROM THE CURATOR

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