Cheapest Tea UK

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Cheapest tea in the UK, in summary:** The cheapest UK tea is supermarket own brand 240-bag boxes at 1-3p a cup; mainstream Yorkshire, Tetley, PG Tips at 4-8p. Drinkable, with the trade offs.

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

The cheapest tea in the UK is supermarket own brand 240-bag boxes, Co op 99 Tea, Sainsbury's Red Label, Tesco Everyday Value, Asda Smartprice, at 3-5p per cup. Mass market brand champions Yorkshire Tea, Tetley, PG Tips at 6-8p per cup. The "cheap and cheerful" category at the under 5p tier is very drinkable; quality has improved over the past 20 years.

The cheapest UK tea options

Supermarket own brand value tier (3-5p per cup)

- **Tesco Everyday Value Tea Bags.** ~£2.50 for 240 bags. ~1p per cup at scale.
- **Asda Smartprice Tea.** Similar pricing.
- **Sainsbury's Basics Tea.** Similar pricing.
- **Morrisons Savers Tea.** Similar pricing.
- **Co op 99 Tea.** Slightly higher (~3p per cup) but quality reputation.
- **Aldi Specially Selected.** Mid tier own brand.
- **Lidl own brand.** Mid tier own brand.

Mid tier own brand (4-7p per cup)

- Sainsbury's Red Label.
- Tesco Original.
- Asda standard tea bags.
- Morrisons standard.

Mass market brand workhorses (6-8p per cup)

- Yorkshire Tea 240-bag.

- Tetley 240-bag.
- PG Tips 240-bag.
- Twinings English Breakfast (slightly higher tier, 8-10p).

Quality at the cheapest tier

What supermarket own brand value tea is really like:

- **Drinkable.** Yes, basic strong British black tea.
- **Quality vs mainstream brands?** Slightly less consistent; less premium leaf grade.
- **With milk + sugar?** Hard to distinguish from mainstream brands.
- **Black drinking?** Quality difference more apparent.
- **Premium tea drinkers?** Will notice the difference.
- **Mass market workplace tea?** Genuinely fine.

Why cheap tea works

The blending tradition

Mainstream British tea is blended, multiple origins combined for consistent character. Even cheap tea uses competent blending; the difference is leaf grade and provenance, not absence of professional craft.

Volume economics

Tea blending and packaging at scale is really cheap. The supermarket own brand model passes most savings to consumers.

Milk and sugar masking

British everyday tea drinking with milk and sugar masks subtle quality differences. Premium leaf differences are harder to detect through milk.

Per cup cost comparison

Tier	Pack price	Per cup
Tesco Everyday Value 240	£2.50	1p
Sainsbury's Red Label 240	£3-4	1.5-2p
Co op 99 Tea 240	£5-7	2-3p
PG Tips 240	£8-10	3-4p
Yorkshire Tea 240	£12-15	5-6p
Tetley 240	£10-13	4-5p
Twinings English Breakfast 80	£3-4	4-5p
Pukka Three Mint 20	£3-4	15-20p

How to evaluate cheap tea

Side by side test

Brew a cup of cheap own brand and a cup of mainstream brand at the same time. Same brewing parameters. Drink both. Identify any meaningful difference.

Cost per year calculation

4-cup a day household, 365 days:

- Tesco Value: £15 annually.
- Yorkshire Tea: £75-90 annually.
- Twinings English Breakfast: £80-120 annually.
- Pukka Three Mint daily: £350-400 annually (much lower volume).

When cheap tea genuinely makes sense

- Workplace tea round (multiple drinkers, occasional drinkers).
- Multiple cups daily for tea as fuel scenarios.
- Pot brewing for hospitality.
- Travel tea (hotel room kettle).
- Cooking with tea (Earl Grey shortbread, tea smoked salmon).
- Backup tea (running out of premium).

When cheap tea is false economy

- You're a serious tea enthusiast and notice quality differences.
- You drink tea black (no milk to mask).
- You drink one cup daily as a deliberate pause (premium worth it).
- You're hosting and want quality.
- The "cheap" tea is past best by date and stale (false economy).

Cheapest by category

Cheapest black tea

Tesco Everyday Value, Asda Smartprice, Sainsbury's Basics. ~1-2p per cup.

Cheapest decaf

Tetley Decaf 240-bag. ~7-9p per cup.

Cheapest green tea

Twinings Pure Green 80-bag. ~5p per cup.

Cheapest herbal

Twinings Pure Camomile, Heath & Heather Pure Peppermint. ~5-8p per cup.

Cheapest Earl Grey

Twinings Earl Grey 80-bag. ~5p per cup.

How to make cheap tea taste better

1. Use just boiled water (not lukewarm).
2. Steep for the full 4-5 minutes (don't rush).
3. Use one bag per cup (not pot brewing too thinly).
4. Cover the cup during steep.
5. Squeeze the bag at the end.
6. Use whole milk (not skimmed).
7. Drink within 10 minutes of brewing.

Good technique elevates cheap tea more than premium tea elevates poor technique.

Free shipping considerations

If buying online, the £35 free shipping threshold is hard to hit with single boxes of supermarket tier tea. Combine with other tea or household items to cross the threshold.

FAQ

Cheapest UK tea? Supermarket Value tier own brand at 1-3p per cup.

Is cheap tea bad? Less premium, but mass market British tea is generally drinkable across all price tiers.

How much can I save? Switching from Yorkshire (5-6p/cup) to Tesco Value (1p/cup) saves £60-80 annually for 4-cup a day household.

Worth it? Depends on your tea drinking style. Mass market brand fans should stick with their preference; budget focused households can save substantially.

Loose leaf cheapest? Yorkshire Tea, Tetley loose leaf at supermarket. ~10-15p per cup.

Curator's note: the cheapest UK tea is supermarket own brand at 1-3p per cup. Quality is acceptable for most everyday use. Premium worth paying for if you drink tea black or care about subtle differences. Lee, teas.co.uk, Tunbridge Wells.

The value sweet spot most drinkers want: supermarket own brand at 1-3p a cup is the cheapest and fine for most everyday use; mainstream Yorkshire, Tetley or PG Tips at 4-8p is the meaningfully better but still cheap middle; premium is worth paying for only if you drink black or care about subtle differences. The per-cup method is in cost per cup; buy a sound everyday tea via Yorkshire Tea or the full tea shop.

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · Spend less on prestige, more on freshness. Two months old and from the supermarket

still tastes better than three years old in a posh tin.

Companion value reading

- Cheapest tea per cup
- Cost per cup explained
- Buying tea in bulk
- Is PG Tips good

More from the tea wiki

- Green tea
- Black tea
- Oolong tea
- White tea
- Herbal tea
- Caffeine in tea
- How to make tea properly
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