English Breakfast Caffeine

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **English Breakfast caffeine, in summary:** English Breakfast is roughly 40-50mg of caffeine per 200ml cup, a range set by the blend, the bag count, the steep and the mug, not a fixed figure.

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

English Breakfast Tea contains 40-50mg of caffeine per 200ml cup, brewed for 4 minutes from one standard tea bag. The exact figure varies by brand, Yorkshire Tea is at the higher end (50mg), Tetley is at the lower end (40-45mg), Twinings sits in between. This is the working caffeine guide for the UK's most drunk tea.

The number, broken down

"English Breakfast" isn't a single tea, it's a blend, and different brands use different ratios. The caffeine variation reflects this:

Brand	Caffeine per 200ml
Yorkshire Tea Original	50mg
Yorkshire Gold	55-60mg
PG Tips Original	45-50mg
Tetley Original	40-45mg
Twinings English Breakfast	40-50mg
Hyson Premium Breakfast	40-50mg
Clipper English Breakfast	40-50mg
Decaf English Breakfast (any brand)	2-5mg

Why brands differ

- **Assam content.** Assam tea is higher in caffeine than Ceylon or Kenyan. Assam led blends (Yorkshire) are higher.

- **Leaf grade.** CTC (small pellets) extracts faster and more completely than orthodox (full leaf). Most EB blends use CTC.
- **Bag fill.** Premium brands typically use slightly more tea per bag. Yorkshire bags are noticeably full.
- **Source variability.** Even within one brand, batch to batch caffeine varies based on harvest conditions.

Brewing changes the number

Caffeine extraction is faster than people realise:

- 2 minutes: ~70% of caffeine extracted
- 3 minutes: ~85%
- 4 minutes: ~95%
- 5+ minutes: full extraction (mostly tannins after 4 minutes)

If you brew for only 2 minutes, your cup contains ~30mg from a Yorkshire bag instead of 50mg. Same bag, different caffeine load.

Comparison with other caffeine sources

Drink	Caffeine per 200ml cup
English Breakfast Tea	40-50mg
Espresso (30ml shot)	60-80mg
Filter coffee	80-120mg
Cola (330ml can)	30-40mg
Energy drink (250ml)	80mg
Green tea	25-40mg
Decaf tea	2-5mg

How many cups before too much?

Daily caffeine guidelines:

- **Healthy adults:** 400mg/day = ~8 cups of British black tea.
- **Pregnancy (NHS):** no more than 200mg of caffeine a day from all sources; caffeine per cup varies with the tea, the dose and the brew, so count every cup rather than aiming for a number.
- **Caffeine sensitive:** 1-2 cups before noon; switch to decaf afterwards.
- **Children:** the NHS says tea and coffee are not suitable for babies or young children; we don't give age or dose advice, so ask a pharmacist, health visitor or GP.

Sleep timing

Caffeine half life is 5-6 hours. Practical advice:

- EB before 2pm: fine for most sleepers.
- 2pm-4pm: may affect light sleepers.
- After 4pm: switch to decaf EB (2-5mg) or herbal.

The decaf option

For evening drinking, pregnancy, or caffeine sensitivity, modern CO2-decaffeinated EB tastes very close to caffeinated. 2-5mg residual caffeine is effectively negligible. Detailed decaf EB guide.

"Builders' tea" caffeine reality

A "proper" cup of builders' tea, strong brewed, milky, sometimes 2 bags per mug, can deliver 80-100mg caffeine. Two of these equals a coffee. Worth knowing if you drink builder's strength tea daily.

FAQ

How much caffeine in English Breakfast Tea? 40-50mg per 200ml cup, brewed 3-4 minutes.

Is EB stronger than green tea? Yes, typically 1.5-2× the caffeine.

How does EB compare to coffee? About a third to half the caffeine of filter coffee.

Does EB have less caffeine if I brew shorter? Yes, 2-minute brew has ~30% less caffeine than 4-minute brew.

Is decaf EB safe in pregnancy? In pregnancy the NHS limit is 200mg of caffeine daily from every source, and since this tea contains caffeine it counts towards that. Ask your midwife if unsure.

Curator's note: most British drinkers underestimate how quickly caffeine adds up across the day. Four cups of Yorkshire Tea = 200mg. Add a coffee and you're at 280mg. Worth tracking if caffeine sensitivity matters. Lee, teas.co.uk, Tunbridge Wells.

A natural follow-on: the English Breakfast range and everyday tea bags.

Reference noted

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

FROM THE CURATOR

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Black tea caffeine reading

- Caffeine in black tea

- the caffeine reference
- Breakfast tea pairing
- Best tea for sleep

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