Has Yorkshire Tea Changed Its Recipe?

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Has Yorkshire Tea changed, in summary:** We know of no announced change to the Yorkshire Tea blend. The bag material did change, and water, brewing and batch variation explain most differences drinkers notice.

Last reviewed by the teas.co.uk team in February 2026. Bag material and water facts checked against sources on 18 September 2026.

"Has Yorkshire Tea changed its recipe?" is a question we hear often from drinkers who've noticed something different about their familiar brew. Yorkshire Tea (Taylors of Harrogate) is generally consistent, but the blend has evolved over decades, and supply chain realities mean batch to batch variation is real. Here's the plain answer.

The short answer

We know of no announced change to the Yorkshire Tea recipe, and this page doesn't establish one either way. The blend has, however, evolved over decades and continues to vary subtly batch by batch as supply conditions change. Specifically:

- The core Assam led blend has been stable for many years.
- Sourcing partners and harvest conditions affect each batch's character.
- The switch from an oil-based plastic to PLA, a plant-based plastic, in the bags may have produced a perceptible difference for some drinkers.
- Soft and hard water can produce noticeably different cups from the SAME tea bag.

Why drinkers think it's changed

1. Genuine batch to batch variation

Tea is an agricultural product. Blends use multiple source tea (Assam, Kenya, Sri Lanka, sometimes more) and ratios shift with availability and quality. A 2024 box of Yorkshire might draw on slightly different sources than a 2022 box. The variation is real but usually subtle.

2. The bag material change

Bettys & Taylors say they replaced the oil-based plastic in their tea bags with PLA, a plant-based plastic (Bettys & Taylors annual review 2025). Some drinkers noticed:

- Slightly different brewing speed (different bag material extracts at different rates)
- Slightly different flavour release in the first 30 seconds

That change was to the bag material. In our experience, after a few minutes' brewing any difference in the cup is small.

3. Water quality differences

Hard water (high mineral content) vs soft water changes how tea brews. Water hardness varies by supply, so moving house can make Yorkshire Tea taste different even when the tea is the same; check your water supplier's postcode information (Thames Water, for example, explains hardness in its area, which includes London, on its hard water page). Water filter switches similarly affect the cup.

4. Kettle and brewing changes

New kettles boil at slightly different rates. Different mug shapes affect cooling. New milk brand has different fat content. All these subtly change the drinking experience without the tea changing.

5. Personal palate changes

Taste perception evolves over years. Tea you found ideal at 25 may seem different at 40, your palate has changed, not the tea.

6. The "you forgot what it tasted like" effect

Memory of taste is unreliable. The cup you drank in 2010 isn't the cup you remember in 2024. Cumulative subtle changes get attributed to the tea rather than to the natural drift of memory.

What HAS changed about Yorkshire Tea over the years

Bag material

The oil-based plastic in the bags was replaced with PLA, a plant-based plastic (Bettys & Taylors annual review 2025). PLA is still a plastic, so follow the disposal instructions on your pack.

Sourcing transparency

Sourcing relationships shift over time with harvests and suppliers.

Decaf method

The decaffeination method varies by product; we only name a method where it is documented for the exact UK pack. Decaf tea still contains a little caffeine.

The Yorkshire Gold blend

Yorkshire Gold is a separate premium blend, different from Original. Sometimes drinkers comparing Original to Gold mistake it for "Original has changed."

What HASN'T changed

- The core Assam led approach
- The Yorkshire Tea Original brand identity and box design (modest evolution only)
- The Taylors of Harrogate ownership (private family company since 1886)
- The basic strong malty flavour profile

How to test if your tea has changed

1. Check water quality, try filtered water vs tap water, or swap to bottled water for one cup.
2. Test brewing time, try 3 minutes vs 4 minutes vs 5 minutes.
3. Check kettle freshness, boil fresh drawn cold water, not water that's been sitting.
4. Try the same brand from a different shop or batch, supply differences may matter.
5. Try Yorkshire Gold for comparison, if it tastes "right," you may have unknowingly changed your taste preference.

The "PG Tips changed too" question

Similar searches exist for PG Tips, Tetley, Twinings English Breakfast. Same answers apply:

- Core blends are stable
- Batch variation is real but subtle
- Bag material changes may have produced perceptible differences
- Water and brewing changes are usually the bigger factor

FAQ

Has Yorkshire Tea changed its recipe? We know of no announced recipe change. Subtle batch to batch variation is normal, and the bag material changed from an oil-based plastic to PLA.

Why does my Yorkshire Tea taste different? Most likely water quality, brewing routine, or palate change rather than the tea itself.

Did the bag change affect the cup? Possibly, slightly; we have no measurements. In our experience, after a few minutes' brewing any difference is small.

Best Yorkshire Tea version? Original is the everyday standard. Gold is more refined. Decaf is excellent for evening. The Hard Water version really is different (formulated for hard water areas).

Is Yorkshire Tea Hard Water a real product? Yes, Taylors of Harrogate make a separate "Yorkshire Tea for Hard Water" blend, made to brew well in hard water.

Curator's note: when customers tell me Yorkshire Tea has "changed," it's almost always something else, new water, new kettle, new milk, or just memory drift. The blend is one of the more consistent products in British tea retail. Try a brewing test before deciding the recipe is wrong. Lee, teas.co.uk, Tunbridge Wells.

has Yorkshire Tea changed at a glance

Aspect	Note
Headline answer	The blend recipe is broadly stable; perception of change is real
What has changed	Sourcing estates, certification standards, packaging, bag material
What has not	The core Assam-Kenya-Rwanda-Sri Lanka multi-origin blend pattern
Drinkers report changes	Tea bag material (oil-based plastic replaced with plant-based PLA), brewing habit drift
Yorkshire Hard Water	Different blend for harder UK water; not the standard product
PG Tips parallel	Similar questions come up about PG Tips; the same water and brewing checks apply
Best test	Brew the same weighed tea in the same water for the same time, side by side
Buying signal	Loose-leaf Yorkshire Gold if you want to compare without a bag

Source Yorkshire Tea from the Yorkshire Tea range or browse the full tea shop (free UK delivery over £35).

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · Yorkshire Tea is best compared by cost per cup. Loose leaf usually wins, though Yorkshire bags sometimes run it close.

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