Novelty Teas: What's Worth Buying

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Novelty teas, in summary:** Novelty teas are dessert, seasonal, cocktail-style and gift-flavoured blends; useful as gifts and treats, with a wide quality range; read the back of the pack.

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

Novelty teas, Digestive Biscuit, Lemon Drizzle, Cherry Bakewell, Chocolate Mint, Caramelised Biscuit, are the conversation starter category of UK tea. Polarising: mocked in some circles, adored in others. Whatever you think of them, they're real products with real customer bases.

What novelty teas are

Tea bags or loose leaf blends designed to taste like specific desserts, baked goods, or unexpected flavours. The base is usually black tea + flavouring (natural or natural identical) + sometimes spices or visible fruit pieces.

The major novelty tea categories

Yorkshire Tea novelty range

- **Cherry Bakewell.** Marzipan cherry vanilla notes. More here.
- **Biscuit Brew.** Tea biscuit flavour profile.
- **Toast & Jam.** Stranger novelty, sweet toasty.

Yorkshire Tea has been the leader in mainstream UK novelty teas. Limited edition releases sell in surprisingly high volumes.

Twinings novelty range

- Spiced Apple & Cinnamon
- Strawberry & Mango
- Pomegranate & Raspberry
- Various seasonal limited editions

Specialist UK novelty

- Whittard Lemon Drizzle Tea
- Whittard Chocolate Brownie Tea
- Pukka Vanilla Chai
- Drink Me Chai dessert sachets (Salted Caramel, Chocolate)

Why novelty teas exist

- **Variety / change of pace.** Daily driver black tea drinkers wanting something different.
- **Comfort drink moments.** Dessert tea pairing without the calories of actual dessert.
- **Gift positioning.** Distinctive packaging; novelty appeal.
- **Children's introduction to tea.** Sweet flavours are more accessible.
- **Limited edition seasonal.** Christmas, Easter, summer themed releases.

The verdict on quality

The good

- Modern novelty teas use proper black tea bases (not just flavoured coloured water)
- Natural flavourings have improved dramatically over older synthetic versions
- Limited edition releases keep the format fresh

The complicated

- Most novelty teas don't replicate their target dessert closely
- Heavy artificial tasting flavouring in cheaper brands
- Some flavour combinations are plain odd (Toast & Jam, anyone?)
- Polarising, purists object; novelty fans love

The "but is it actually good" question

Novelty teas, for the most part, are fine. Some are really enjoyable (Cherry Bakewell, Lemon Drizzle, Caramelised Biscuit). Some are forgettable (Toast & Jam). None are terrible if brewed properly.

The cup quality follows the same rules as flavoured tea generally, quality of base tea + quality of flavouring + balance. Premium tier novelty teas (Whittard, Pukka) are noticeably better than budget supermarket novelty.

Use cases

Afternoon treat

When daily Yorkshire Tea feels too routine. Cherry Bakewell with a real Bakewell biscuit; Lemon Drizzle with lemon cake.

Gift

Distinctive enough to feel thoughtful; affordable enough for casual gifting.

Visitor impressing

Novelty teas spark conversation. Useful for visitors who want something distinctive.

Children

Sweet flavours introduce tea concept; caffeine usually present so check appropriateness.

Comfort moments

Wet Saturday afternoon; want dessert flavour without dessert calories.

How to brew novelty tea

1. 1 bag per 200ml.
2. Water at full rolling boil.
3. Steep 3-4 minutes (don't overbrew, flavouring concentrates).
4. Drink black, with milk, or with a small amount of honey.

Caffeine

40-50mg per cup (when based on black tea). Caffeine free novelty options exist (rooibos based dessert teas).

The "novelty tea snobbery" problem

Some tea purists consider novelty teas inherently inferior. This is overstated, flavoured black tea has been a legitimate British tradition since Earl Grey (early 19th century). Novelty teas are an extension of the same flavoured tea logic. Drink what you enjoy without apology.

Buying novelty teas

- Yorkshire Tea novelty range (Cherry Bakewell, Biscuit Brew), major supermarkets and direct from Taylors of Harrogate.
- Twinings novelty range, supermarkets.
- Whittard novelty range, Whittard shops, online.
- Specialist novelty teas, independent retailers including teas.co.uk.

The "best novelty teas" subjective list

- **Yorkshire Tea Cherry Bakewell.** Distinctive marzipan cherry character.
- **Yorkshire Tea Biscuit Brew.** The flagship novelty.
- **Whittard Lemon Drizzle.** Premium tier, refined.
- **Whittard Chocolate Brownie.** Real cocoa character.

- **Drink Me Chai Salted Caramel.** Sachet based; cult following.
- **Pukka Vanilla Chai.** Vanilla led organic novelty.
- **Twinings Spiced Apple & Cinnamon.** Christmas friendly.

Cautions

- **Caffeine.** Most novelty teas use black tea base, full caffeine load.
- **Sugar (in some).** Some sachet based novelty teas (Drink Me Chai) are heavily sweetened.
- **Allergens.** Marzipan flavoured teas use almond flavouring (synthetic or natural, check for nut allergies).
- **Pregnancy.** Standard black tea caffeine considerations.

FAQ

Are novelty teas any good? Mostly yes. Quality varies, premium tier (Whittard, Pukka) better than budget mainstream.

Best novelty tea UK? Yorkshire Tea Cherry Bakewell, Whittard Lemon Drizzle, Drink Me Chai Salted Caramel.

Caffeine? 40-50mg per cup (black tea base). Rooibos based dessert teas: 0mg.

Are they worth buying? For variety, gifts, or specific treat moments, yes. For daily drinking, bags get repetitive fast.

Best for non tea drinkers? Sweet novelty teas (Caramel, Chocolate, Vanilla) make accessible introductions.

Curator's note: novelty teas are fine. Drink them without apology. Some are very good; none are crimes against tea. The "purist" objection misses that flavoured tea has always been part of British tea drinking. Lee, teas.co.uk, Tunbridge Wells.

What you need to know: novelty teas

Type	The note
Dessert-flavoured blends	Sticky toffee, chocolate, cake-batter; sweet aroma, mild quality
Holiday / seasonal	Mince pie, mulled-wine, gingerbread; gift-driven
Cocktail-style	Mojito, gin-and-tonic, espresso-martini themed
Children-friendly	Cotton candy, bubble-gum; usually rooibos or honeybush base
Display / blooming flowers	Hand-tied flowers that "bloom" in glass teapots
Joke teas	"Help, Im going to be late" labels; minimal tea content
Quality range	Wide: from really good flavour blends to gimmicks short on leaf
Best as	Gifts, occasional treats, conversation starters, not daily cup

On the shopping side, see the English tea range and loose leaf range.

Reference noted

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

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · Pick what you'll actually drink every day. A novelty tea you actually drink beats a fancy one you only admire.

Novelty tea reading

Continue with herbal infusion guide, rooibos, tea gifts, flowering tea, Christmas tea and how to judge tea quality.

More from the tea wiki

- Green tea
- Black tea
- Oolong tea
- White tea
- Herbal tea
- Caffeine in tea
- How to make tea properly
- Loose leaf vs teabag

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