PG Tips Chai Special Blend

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **PG Tips Chai Special Blend, in summary:** A cheap, milk friendly mainstream spiced black: judged on the right brief it does the everyday job, but it is not a simmered from scratch masala chai.

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

PG Tips Chai Special Blend is the mainstream supermarket budget chai option, accessible price, recognisable spice character, designed for fast brewing and milk tea drinking. Not premium tier; not authentic Indian chai stall quality; quite serviceable for everyday convenience.

What it is

PG Tips Chai is a flavoured black tea blend, strong British black tea (PG Tips' standard CTC base) with chai spices added. Designed for typical British brewing (milk + sugar) but with chai flavour profile.

What's in the bag

- **Black tea base.** CTC blend (Assam, Kenyan, Sri Lankan typically).
- **Cardamom.** The dominant chai aromatic.
- **Cinnamon.** Warming sweetness.
- **Ginger.** Gentle heat.
- **Cloves.** Sharp depth.
- **Possibly: black pepper, vanilla flavouring.**

What it tastes like

Strong black tea with recognisable chai spices. Less complex than premium chai but distinctly chai style. Built for milk and sugar, which softens and rounds the cup.

How to brew

1. 1 bag per 200ml.
2. Just boiled water.

3. Steep 4-5 minutes.
4. Add milk and sugar to taste.

The pan brew alternative

For a slightly more authentic cup using PG Tips Chai bags:

1. Pour 100ml water + 100ml milk into a small saucepan.
2. Bring to gentle simmer.
3. Add 1 PG Tips Chai bag (or 2 for stronger).
4. Simmer 3-4 minutes.
5. Sweeten generously.
6. Pour into mug.

The pan brewing technique closes some of the gap between PG Tips Chai and traditional pan brewed masala chai.

The "budget chai" positioning

PG Tips Chai sits at the entry level price point in the UK chai market:

- Cheap (£2.50-3.50 per 40 bags)
- Widely available in supermarkets
- No specialist preparation required
- Brand familiarity helps approachability

Clear framing: it's the entry point to chai for British drinkers who normally drink PG Tips Original. Not a serious chai experience.

Quality comparison

vs Twinings Spiced Chai

Comparable mainstream tier. Different brand identity; similar cup quality.

vs Tetley Masala Chai

Tetley Masala uses higher quality Assam base; the cup is more authentically chai style. Better than PG Tips Chai for traditional preparation.

vs Pukka Vanilla Chai

Pukka is organic, premium positioned, more refined. Better cup quality at higher price.

vs Drink Me Chai sachets

Different format, instant sachet vs tea bag. Drink Me Chai sachets give a more "café style" sweet milky chai latte; PG Tips Chai is closer to traditional bagged chai.

vs traditional pan brewed chai (whole spices)

Dramatically different. Pan brewed with whole spices is a different category entirely, more aromatic, more complex, more time consuming. More on traditional chai.

Use cases

- **Daily PG Tips drinkers wanting variety.** Familiar brand; new flavour.
- **Office tea round.** Mainstream enough for shared kitchens.
- **Budget chai.** When premium chai isn't affordable.
- **Children's chai introduction.** Mild enough for older children.
- **Travel.** Familiar UK supermarket brand available everywhere.

Caffeine

40-50mg per cup. Standard PG Tips caffeine range.

Cautions

- **Caffeine sensitivity.** Standard British black tea level.
- **Pregnancy.** Within NHS caffeine limits is fine.
- **Iron absorption.** Tannins; drink between meals.

The verdict

PG Tips Chai Special Blend is a serviceable mainstream supermarket chai. Not exceptional; not bad. If you're a PG Tips drinker who wants chai variety without changing brand or paying premium prices, this is a reasonable choice.

For real chai experience, pan brew with whole spices and CTC Assam base. For convenience quality balance, Drink Me Chai sachets or pan brewed Tetley Masala. For organic premium, Pukka Vanilla Chai.

Buying

Most UK supermarkets carry PG Tips Chai Special Blend. ~£2.50-3.50 per 40 bags.

FAQ

Is PG Tips Chai any good? Adequate for mainstream chai drinking. Not premium; not bad.

How does it compare to traditional chai? Dramatically simpler. Pan brewed whole spice chai is a different category entirely.

Caffeine? 40-50mg per cup.

Best way to brew it? Pan brew in 50/50 milk water for closer to traditional cup. Standard tea bag brewing for daily convenience.

Is it authentic? No, it's a mainstream British interpretation of chai. Not Indian stall quality. Convenient and familiar.

Curator's note: PG Tips Chai is the budget end of the UK chai shelf. Fine for what it is. If you want chai style flavour for the price of regular tea, this works. For a real chai experience, pan brew with whole spices. Lee, teas.co.uk, Tunbridge Wells.

The budget chai, judged on its brief

Aspect	PG Tips Chai Special Blend
What it is	a mainstream spiced black tea bag, mass market
Caffeine	yes, black tea base
Strength	milder, sweeter leaning, built for milk
Best use	an everyday, low cost milky chai cup
Not	a simmered from scratch masala chai

Reference noted

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

On the practical shopping side: English Breakfast, Earl Grey, green tea, loose leaf tea, Darjeeling, oolong, and herbal tea. There is plenty more in the tea shop, and chai orders post free in the UK above £35.

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · Start with this budget chai and stay with it until it stops pleasing you. Most rich teas reward patience, not budget.

Chai reading

- Chai tea (the pillar)
- Chai category
- Caffeine free chai
- Chai from scratch

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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