Scottish Blend Tea: The Soft Water Builder

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Scottish Blend, in summary:** Scottish Blend is the Scottish-water-matched mass-market builder tea brand, blended for the soft-water conditions of Scotland; bolder than Yorkshire.

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

Scottish Blend Tea (sometimes "Scottish Breakfast") is the dedicated tea category for Scotland's soft water, different blend ratios designed to brew well where mineral content is low. PG Tips Scottish Blend, Williamson Scottish Blend, Brodies Scottish Breakfast all serve this market.

The water hardness factor

Scotland (especially the Highlands and the West) has predominantly soft water, low mineral content. England (especially the South East and Midlands) has predominantly hard water, high mineral content.

The same tea brewed in different waters produces very different cups:

- **Hard water:** Strong tea blends needed; minerals can dull tea flavour.
- **Soft water:** Lighter blends preferred; standard strong blends can taste sharp or astringent.

Why Scottish Blend exists

Most British tea brands use one blend for all UK water conditions. PG Tips, Yorkshire, and others making water specific variants reflects:

- Real water condition cup quality differences
- Brand loyalty marketing (Scottish drinkers wanting Scottish blend)
- Volume sufficient to justify separate production

Major Scottish Blend products

PG Tips Scottish Blend

The most distributed Scottish water tea. Reformulated PG Tips for Scottish water. More here.

Williamson Scottish Blend

Specialist Scottish tea brand. Heritage positioning.

Brodies Scottish Breakfast

Edinburgh based. Premium Scottish blend.

Scottish Tea (specialty brands)

Various smaller Scottish brands offering blended teas.

What Scottish Blend tastes like

Smoother, less astringent than standard mainstream British blends when brewed in soft water. The reformulated blend has:

- Less Assam (which can taste sharp in soft water)
- More Ceylon and Indonesian origin tea
- Slightly lighter overall character

In hard water, Scottish Blend tastes thin and weak. In soft water, it shines.

How to brew

1. 1 bag per 200ml.
2. Water at full rolling boil.
3. Steep 3-4 minutes (slightly shorter than standard PG Tips).
4. Add milk and sugar to taste.

Where Scottish Blend works

- Scotland (especially West Highlands, Glasgow, Edinburgh)
- North West England (parts of Cumbria, Lake District)
- Parts of Wales (especially North Wales)
- Some areas of Northern England with soft water

Where it doesn't work

- Hard water England (London, South East, Midlands)
- Hard water areas anywhere

In hard water, choose Yorkshire Tea Hard Water or standard PG Tips instead.

Caffeine

40-50mg per 200ml cup. Standard British black tea range.

The Scottish tea heritage

Scotland has its own tea traditions:

- Strong morning tea drinking with milk and sugar
- "Tea time" as a social habit
- Robert Drysdale's 1840s Scottish tea tasting heritage
- Edinburgh based premium tea brands (Brodies, Eteaket)

Scottish tea identity is distinct enough to support its own market.

Comparable products

Product	Designed for
Scottish Blend Tea	Soft Scottish water
Yorkshire Tea Hard Water	Hard English water (opposite formulation)
Standard PG Tips / Yorkshire Tea	Mid range water (most UK)

Buying

Scottish Blend products primarily distributed in Scottish supermarkets. Available across UK via online retailers. Limited mainstream distribution in England.

FAQ

What is Scottish Blend Tea? Tea reformulated for Scottish soft water brewing.

Should I buy it in England? Generally no, designed for soft water. In hard water England, standard PG Tips or Yorkshire Tea Hard Water are better.

Caffeine? 40-50mg per cup.

Best for whom? Scottish drinkers in soft water regions; soft water English regions.

Why does water hardness matter? Mineral content affects how tea compounds extract and present in the cup.

Curator's note: Scottish Blend is a niche product solving a real problem. Most British drinkers don't realise water hardness affects their tea cup; if you've moved between regions and noticed your tea tastes "different," water is usually why. Choose the blend for your water. Lee, teas.co.uk, Tunbridge Wells.

Scottish Blend tea at a glance

Aspect	The note
Brand	Scottish Blend, owned by Brooke Bond (Unilever) since 1986
Best use	Tea blend formulated for Scottish soft-water
UK shelf	Mass-market; widely-stocked Scottish supermarkets
Cup character	Stronger and bolder than Yorkshire Tea, for soft water
Sourcing	African (Kenya, Malawi) + Indian (Assam) blend; Rainforest Alliance

Aspect	The note
Format	Round bags (most common); also pyramid bags premium tier
Pricing	Mass-market; £2-£3 per 80-bag pack
The read	The Scottish answer to Yorkshire Tea; water-matched

More on builder tea

- Yorkshire Tea
- Strong builder's tea
- Best UK tea brands
- Water for tea

Reference noted

- NHS: Water, drinks and your health

Teas in the related corner of the range: English Breakfast, Earl Grey, green tea, loose leaf tea, Darjeeling, oolong, and herbal tea. Browse the full tea range; soft water blends included, orders over £35 travel free in the UK.

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · Scottish Blend or not, compare teas by cost per cup. Loose leaf usually wins, though a box of Scottish Blend bags sometimes keeps up.

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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