

BREW IT FAIR: FACT SHEET - WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT TEA?



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FAIR**



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FUN FACTS

- A tea bush can take up to four years to mature and then it can produce leaves for over 50 years.
- Some tea trees can grow as tall as a house! While most tea plants are kept small for easy picking, wild tea trees can grow over 9 meters tall!
- All tea comes from the same plant – whether it's black, green or white, it all comes from the same plant – Camellia Sinensis.
- Tea pickers are super skilled, many tea farmers pick leaves by hand because they are better than machines, it takes years of practice!
- Elephants can help make tea! in some places like Thailand, tea leaves are fed to elephants, and the tea is made from their faeces. It's called Elephant dung tea and it's one of the rarest teas in the world.



FACTS FROM OUR TEA REPORT

WWW.FAIRTRADE.ORG.UK/RESOURCES-LIBRARY/DO-IT-FAIR/BREW-IT-FAIR-TEA-REPORT/

- When tea first arrived from China in the mid-17th century, it was so expensive that only royalty and the very wealthy could afford it. But, by the 1800s, the popularity of the drink had grown, with British colonies established in India, Sri Lanka and East Africa to meet the increasing demand. Today, tea is the most popular beverage in the world, apart from water.
- In the UK, we drink 100 million cups of tea every day.
- Smallholder farmers produce around 60% of the world's tea.
- The price of an average tea bag today is just around two or three pence.
- Tea has the potential to contribute to rural development, water access, improve education outcomes, empower women and – ultimately – change lives.
- The UK accounts for 61% of all Fairtrade tea sold across the world. Fairtrade has worked in the tea sector for the last three decades, and in that time, we have worked in partnership with companies to source Fairtrade tea and deliver specialist programmes and expertise.





- The volumes of Fairtrade tea that producers can sell to Fairtrade markets remains incredibly low (around 4% of eligible Fairtrade production is sold on Fairtrade terms), limiting Fairtrade's ability to achieve more.
- Clipper is the largest Fairtrade tea brand and supported the creation of the Fairtrade tea standards over 30 years ago.
- In 2008, Co-op was the first UK retailer to sell Fairtrade own-brand tea. The 99 Blend is still sold today.
- Greggs has been offering customers Fairtrade tea in its stores and on-the-go since 2012.
- Marks & Spencer has the longest commitment to working with Fairtrade on 100% of its own-brand Fairtrade tea and coffee of any UK retailer, and generates more Fairtrade Premium for tea growers than any other UK retailer.
- In 2023, Ringtons supplied more Fairtrade tea globally than any other supplier.
- Sainsbury's has converted all of its black tea sourcing to Fairtrade this year. This move builds on a longstanding 23-year partnership between the retailer and Fairtrade and will contribute to building a sustainable tea sector and a resilient food system.
- All Waitrose & Partners' own-label tea is 100% Fairtrade.

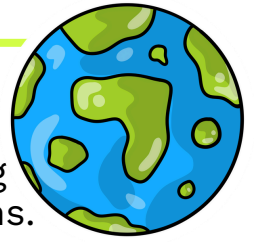
FACTS FROM SURVEY FROM KENYAN FARMERS

SOURCE: FAIRTRADE FOUNDATION / FAIRTRADE AFRICA SURVEY OF OVER 250 PEOPLE IN KENYAN TEA GROWING COMMUNITIES

- Only 1 in 5 of the tea workers and tea farmers surveyed said they earn enough income every month to support their families with the essentials.
- Over 70% of tea workers said their biggest challenge is wages. Many, particularly women, mentioned they had not received wage increases or promotions after years of work and struggled to meet costs for their families, including education for their children.
- Half of the younger tea workers surveyed said the impacts of climate change on tea production is their biggest challenge, seeing the impact this will have on their ability to make money from working in tea in the future.



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- 55% of tea farmers said their biggest challenge is changing weather patterns on their farms, raising costs and impacting their ability to maintain an adequate income from their farms.
 - 99% of both tea workers and tea farmers surveyed said that Fairtrade Premium has been spent on projects that address their main challenges, including education and health care, community improvements such as schools and roads and projects to add make extra money, such as beekeeping and growing other crops.



FACTS FROM THE FAIRTRADE RISKMAP

RISKMAP.FAIRTRADE.NET

- The tea sector generally provides insufficient income to farmers and workers and wages often fall far below living wage estimates.
- Globally, tea production employs around 13 million people.
- Nearly 50% of tea is produced in China, followed by India, Kenya, Sri Lanka and Turkey. Tea is also a significant industry in countries such as Uganda, Malawi, Indonesia and Bangladesh.
- In many countries, more than half of all tea workers are women. In their labour-intensive, low-paid jobs, they often face gender-based violence and discrimination, and exclusion from decision-making and union representation.
- Tea plantation workers in India, Kenya and Sri Lanka are often migrants or the descendants of immigrants. They face discrimination in many forms, including gender-based, as well as ethnic violence.
- Tea cultivation is labour-intensive. Picking is done by hand and involves carrying heavy loads over long distances. The lack of protective gear exposes workers to health risks from agrochemicals.
- Global tea production faces growing threats from climate change as our weather patterns become increasingly erratic and unpredictable. Key challenges include warmer temperatures and droughts, reduced rainfall and the spread of tea-related pests and diseases.



THANKS FOR READING

CONTACT INFORMATION

For any questions related to this document,
please get in touch with the campaigns team

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