

Coming clean

Our tests reveal that Fairy is the best washing-up liquid. Some supermarket own brands did well, too, but others struggled

Fairy Liquid has been Britain's best-selling washing-up liquid for decades, but with some supermarket own brands now selling for as little as 13p, even the most devoted fan of the 'mild green' liquid might be tempted to try an alternative.

However, our tests show that Fairy, which outsells its closest rivals by around five to one, remains the most effective cleaner on the market. It produced outstanding results in both of our key tests, which first measured how many plates smeared with non-fatty foods each liquid cleaned, and then checked how many plates covered in fat they handled. Fairy Original (98p) cleaned 50 per cent more dirty plates than Sainsbury's Active Naturals Antibacterial (85p).



If you like Fairy's cleaning power but don't like its prices, there are two cheaper Best Buys to look out for – Tesco Citrus (62p) and Asda Original with Antibacterial Agents (68p).

We also tested some ultra-cheap liquids from supermarket budget ranges (Asda Smart Price and Tesco Value, both 13p). Squirt for squirt, they don't match up to our Best Buys, but if you're prepared to add lots of washing-up liquid to the bowl each time you do the dishes, they do offer value for money.

There is bad news, though, for fans of environmentally friendly Ecover. Its Lemon and Aloe Vera liquid was one of the most expensive products on test and got the lowest overall score.

100ml of Asda Smart Price (13p) cleans only 750 dirty plates but is better value for money than Sainsbury's Active Naturals Antibacterial (85p)

87% Fairy Liquid Original 98p

The classic green Fairy Liquid Original is highly concentrated and has outstanding cleaning powers. It produced very long-lasting bubbles, and cleaned more dirty plates per bottle (around 11,000) than any other liquid in our test. At 98p, it's the cheapest of the Fairy Best Buys (28p cheaper than Naturals Antibacterial), so it also represents good value for money. If you enjoy a traditional roast dinner at the weekend, this one is for you – it cleaned more plates smeared with fat than any other washing-up liquid we have tested.

WE LIKE In our fat removal tests, Fairy Liquid Original cleaned four times as many fatty plates as Tesco Value.



WHICH? BEST BUY

Cheapest stores Asda, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Tesco, Waitrose **Bottle size** 500ml

WHAT HAPPENED TO PERSIL?

Will new formulation cure Persil's fatty-plate failures?

Persil is the second biggest brand in the market after Fairy, but its products performed poorly in our laboratory. The two products we tested, Persil Fresh and Persil Aloe, cleaned fewer fatty plates per squirt of liquid than any other liquid on test – six times fewer than our Fairy Best Buys. They were also outperformed by cheaper

supermarket products such as Sainsbury's Lemon Grove and Tesco Citrus.

Persil told us: 'In August we will be changing the formulation which will further enhance the performance of the products.' Because they are being reformulated we have not included the Persil products in the table.



USING THE TABLE

We tested new products from leading brands of washing-up liquid. The more stars the better.

Test performance

Foam duration Based on the number of plates smeared with non-fatty food we cleaned using a set amount of liquid before the foam disappeared.

Fat removal How well the liquid removes grease and keeps it dispersed and suspended in the water. **Value for money** Takes into account the price quoted in the table, foam duration and fat removal ratings.

Cleaning power Based on how many plates smeared with non-fatty food you can wash with one bottle of the liquid.

Score

Based on:
Performance **70%**
Value for money **25%**
Consistency of liquid **5%**

MODEL

- 1 FAIRY Liquid Original
- 2 FAIRY Naturals Antibacterial
- 3 TESCO Citrus
- 4 ASDA Original with Antibacterial Agents
- 5 FAIRY Active Foam
- 6 ASDA Lemon
- 7 MARKS & SPENCER Classic
- 8 SAINSBURY'S Lemon Grove
- 9 SOMERFIELD Original
- 10 MORNING FRESH Original
- 11 MORNING FRESH Oxygen
- 12 ASDA Smart Price
- 13 SAINSBURY'S Active Naturals Antibacterial
- 14 TESCO Value
- 15 ECOVER Lemon and Aloe Vera

Contacts

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Ecover
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www.ecover.com

Fairy
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www.fairy-dish.co.uk

Marks & Spencer
0845 3021234
www.marksandspencer.com

Morning Fresh
0161 491 8000
www.pzcussons.com

Persil
0800 776644
www.persil.co.uk

Sainsbury's
0800 636262
www.sainsburys.co.uk

Somerfield
0117 935 9259
www.somerfield.co.uk

Tesco
0845 7225533
www.tesco.com

81% Fairy Naturals Antibacterial £1.26

The second Fairy Best Buy is almost as good at fat removal as Fairy Original. You can clean 4,500 greasy plates with a 500ml bottle of this, compared with just 2,000 using a 1,000ml bottle of ultra-cheap Tesco Value (13p). The foam is not quite as long-lasting as Fairy Original and as a result you can clean around 600 fewer dirty plates. The liquid's antibacterial action is designed to stop build-up of germs on your dishcloth. We didn't test for this but previous research suggests such additives aren't necessary.

WORTH KNOWING You can clean more than 10,000 dirty plates with a single bottle (only Fairy Liquid Original cleans more).

Cheapest stores Asda, Tesco Bottle size 500ml



WHICH?
BEST
BUY

76% Tesco Citrus 62p

We were impressed with the performance of Tesco Citrus liquid. It's the top supermarket own brand and, at 62p, it's also the cheapest of our Best Buys (less than half the price of Fairy Naturals Antibacterial).

It offers good all-round cleaning power and tackles greasy plates effectively – in our tests, one 2ml squirt cleaned an average of 15 plates, compared with just 11 cleaned by Asda Lemon (48p). Its bubbles don't last quite as long as Fairy Original's, but it comprehensively outperformed its cheap sister liquid, Tesco Value, whether we were cleaning plates smeared with fat or ones smeared with non-fatty food residues.

WE LIKE Tesco Citrus cleans more dirty plates than Asda Original Antibacterial and is cheaper, too.

Cheapest store Tesco Bottle size 500ml



WHICH?
BEST
BUY

A bottle
of Fairy
Original
cleaned
more dirty
plates in
our test
than a
bottle of
any other
liquid

74% Asda Original Antibacterial 68p

Asda Original Antibacterial can't quite match the outstanding value for money offered by Tesco Citrus but outperformed all the other supermarket own brands in our test. You can wash 625 more plates per bottle than with Sainsbury's Original (69p), and 1,600 more plates than with Sainsbury's Lemon Grove (64p). Don't confuse this Best Buy with the cheaper Asda Lemon or Asda Smart Price, neither of which did as well in our tests. We didn't assess how well the antibacterial ingredients worked.

WORTH KNOWING A bottle of this will clean nearly 1,400 more dirty plates than a bottle of Sainsbury's Naturals Antibacterial.

Cheapest store Asda Bottle size 500ml



WHICH?
BEST
BUY

SPECIFICATION		WHICH? TEST PERFORMANCE					SCORE %
PRICE (£)	SIZE (ml)	FOAM DURATION	FAT REMOVAL	VALUE FOR MONEY	DIRTY PLATES CLEANED PER 100ml	CLEANING POWER	
0.98	500	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	2,250	★★★★★	87
1.26	500	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	2,075	★★★★★	81
0.62	500	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	1,775	★★★★★	76
0.68	500	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	1,750	★★★★★	74
1.99	375	★★★★★	★★★★★	★	2,575	★★★★★	71
0.48	500	★★★	★★★	★★★★★	1,650	★★★★	70
0.89	500	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	1,725	★★★★★	69
0.64	500	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	1,425	★★★★	68
0.69	500	★★★	★★★	★★★★★	1,625	★★★★	67
0.68	500	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	1,375	★★★	60
0.68	500	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	1,350	★★★	59
0.13	1,000	★★	★★	★★★★★	750	★★★★	59
0.85	500	★★★	★★★	★★★★	1,475	★★★★	57
0.13	1,000	★	★	★★★★★	725	★★★★	53
0.99	500	★★★	★★★	★★★★	1,275	★★★	52

How we test

A mountain of plates

To test the liquids, we washed more than 2,300 plates in a machine which mimics the action of washing by hand.

To check how good each liquid was at removing a mixture of everyday foods, we smeared plates with ingredients that replicate residues of pasta, meat, eggs and fish. We then counted the number of plates cleaned before the foam disappeared. This gave us our 'Foam duration' rating in the table and a figure for the number of plates 100ml of each liquid could clean.

We then tested for fat removal by pouring a coloured animal fat on to our plates and counted the number cleaned before the fat started to settle back on to them.