

Budget buys near the Finish

Cheaper dishwasher tablets challenge the big boys in our test

The 'No 1 recommended' seal and the endorsement of 20 manufacturers on packs of Finish have helped to make the brand the market leader. And in our tests, Finish Quantum is the best combination tablet – but it's also the most expensive, so it's worth checking the superb budget buys on offer. Tablets from Glist, Tesco and Lidl gave great results at a fraction of the cost of Finish.

We tested 11 combination and five detergent-only tablets. The list of claims for combination tablets grows ever longer, with the 5-in-1 actions usually comprising detergent, stainless-steel shine, glass protection, salt

action and rinse aid. They are more convenient than detergent-only, as you don't need to add rinse aid, but always read your dishwasher instruction manual for guidance on adding salt, based on the water hardness where you live.

We found that the best detergent-only tablets gave marginally better results than the best combination tablets, and generally cost less, too. Three new products from Finish and Fairy are being tested and will be covered in next month's 'First look'.

To see which machine you should use and for more on the tests we run, see our dishwashers report on p72.



1 COMBINATION

80% Finish Quantum Powerball
25p per wash

This combination tablet was very impressive at removing all types of stain, especially tea. The formulation has been updated since we last tested and the tablets have improved enough to make them a Best Buy. For added convenience, there's no need to unwrap each tablet, as the protective resin coating dissolves in the dishwasher.

WHICH?
BEST BUY

Available Most supermarkets Pack sizes 12, 24, 36, 48



2 COMBINATION

80% Glist Multi Action Magic Vinegar
19p per wash

Glist has also put new ingredients into its tablets – in this case, in the form of traditional vinegar. This gave fantastically sparkling glasses, and, although slightly worse than Finish on tea stains, it was one of the best combination tablets for removing milk, starch and egg stains. And it costs a quarter less than its Best Buy rival.

WHICH?
BEST BUY

Available Wilkinsons Pack sizes 30

Don't Buy

Gumption is cheap but left our dishes dirty

We rate Gumption 6-in-1 (11) as a Don't Buy. It was appalling at removing any of our test stains effectively. Don't be tempted by the low price.



WHICH?
DON'T BUY



EXCEPTIONAL
VALUE WHICH?

12 DETERGENT ONLY

84% Tesco Value
9p per wash

Top marks for Tesco, as every little tablet helps you to save 16p per wash compared with Finish Quantum (see above). You do have to add separate rinse aid, however, and salt as usual. It wasn't quite as good at removing egg as the best combination tablet, but for dishwashing on a budget it's unbeatable.

WHICH?
BEST BUY

Available Tesco Pack sizes 30



EXCEPTIONAL
VALUE WHICH?

13 DETERGENT ONLY

82% Lidl W5
9p per wash

It's not often we feature a Best Buy from discounter Lidl, but its own brand W5 shows just how good some products from the German supermarket chain can be. These tablets are remarkably good at cleaning, rinsing and preventing cloudiness for the price, even when the cost of separate rinse aid and salt is included.

WHICH?
BEST BUY

Available Lidl Pack sizes 30

Contacts

Aldi 0870 513 4262; www.aldi.co.uk
Easy 0800 018 1217; www.plp.co.uk

Ecover 0845 130 2230
www.ecover.com

Finish 0845 769 7079
www.finish.co.uk

Glist 0800 216730
www.glistinfo.co.uk

Gumption 0845 607 0222
www.thegumptioncompany.com

Lidl 0870 444 1234; www.lidl.co.uk

Marks & Spencer
0845 302 1234
www.marksandspencer.co.uk

Morrisons (Cyclon)
0845 611 6111
www.morrisons.co.uk

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

Sonett 0845 330 3440
www.greenfibres.com

Tesco 0800 505555
www.tesco.com

Waitrose 0800 188 884
www.waitrose.com

Wilkinson 0800 032 9329
www.wilkinsonplus.com

BRAND	SPECIFICATION			WHICH? TEST PERFORMANCE						SCORE %
	PACK SIZE	COST PER PACK (£)	COST PER WASH (p)	CLEANING PERFORMANCE				GLASSES		
				TEA	MILK	STARCH	EGG	RINSING	CLOUDINESS PREVENTION	
COMBINATION										
1 FINISH Quantum Powerball	48	11.79	25	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	80
2 GLIST Multi Action Magic Vinegar	30	5.79	19	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	80
3 ALDI Magnum 5-in-1	40	2.99	7	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	73
4 SAINSBURY'S Perform	30	3.65	12	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	72
5 EASY 5-in-1	13 ^a	0.99	8	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	63
6 MARKS & SPENCER 4-in-1	25	3.49	14	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	61
7 LIDL W5 Perfect 5	40	2.99	7	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★	59
8 MORRISONS Cyclon 5-in-1	60	5.99	10	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★	58
9 WAITROSE 5-in-1	45	5.35	12	★★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★★	53
10 WILKINSON Wilko 5-in-1	25	2.49	10	★★	★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★★	★★	40
11 GUMPTION 6-in-1	24	0.99	4	★	★★	★	★	★★	★	16
DETERGENT ONLY										
12 TESCO Value	30	1.78	9	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	84
13 LIDL W5	30	1.78	9	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	82
14 ECOVER	25	3.88	19	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	73
15 TESCO Naturally	25	2.49	13	★★★★★	★★★★	★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	73
16 SONETT	25	5.75 ^b	26	★★★★★	★★★★★	★	★	★★★★★	★★★★★	57

^a Ten plus 30 per cent extra free ^b £5.75 at Planet Organic shops, £5.40 (plus £4.50 p&p) at www.greenfibres.com, £5.40 (plus £2.25 p&p) at www.thereustbeabetterway.co.uk

Naturally clean

Which tablets are the greenest?

Tough stains need tough chemicals, and most dishwasher detergents contain phosphates, bleaching agents and surfactants, which break down stains. These leave dishes sparkling, but they could also harm the environment.

We've tested three products that claim to be ecologically friendly compared with conventional products, which contain more than 30 per cent phosphates. All three are free from phosphates, petrochemicals, chlorine compounds and synthetic colours and are not tested on animals.

Ecover (14) tablets impressed us and

removed all food stains well. Starch proved a problem for **Tesco Naturally (15)** tablets, and their ability to remove milk was only average. **Sonett (16)** tablets fared less well, failing to remove starch and egg.

If you've chosen a green tablet, using a matching rinse aid makes sense. We tested the green tablets with the same rinse aid as the other detergent tablets, and also Ecover and Sonett with their own-brand rinse aids. While these may cost a bit more, they were as effective as the standard rinse aid.



USING THE TABLE

The more stars the better.

Specification

Pack size The largest widely available pack size in stores. **Cost per pack** The lowest high-street price of the largest widely available pack size. **Cost per wash** The average cost of a tablet, calculated from

the largest pack size and price. For detergent-only tablets, this includes an additional 3p for rinse aid and dishwasher salt.

Test performance

Cleaning How well tea, milk, starch and egg stains were removed. **Rinsing** Based on brilliance and the lack of watermarks on glasses after

one wash. For detergent-only tablets, we added separate rinse aid.

Cloudiness prevention How well it prevents filming and keeps deposits from glasses after ten washes.

Score

Ignores price and is based on:
 Cleaning **70%**
 Rinsing **15%**
 Cloudiness **15%**

OUR RESEARCH

When selecting dishwasher tablets to test, we consult market intelligence reports, industry experts and

manufacturers. Tested brands include top sellers from the most popular brands, some lesser-known brands and some bargain brands.