

A Natural An-tea-dote For All That Ales Ya

Tea is soaked in culture and history, with its roots dating back to ancient China. Chinese legend says that tea was created more than 5,000 years ago when the leaves fell into the boiling water of an early emperor. From there, tea has become a popular drink, with a culture of its own. True teas are made from the dried leaves of the tea plant, which was first cultivated in China and found growing wild in India. The different processing techniques are used on the leaves of the tea plant in order to produce the many different styles. Green tea is produced by steaming the fresh-picked leaves, followed by heat-drying, while black tea is made by allowing the tea leaves to ferment completely before firing. Oolong teas are made by partially fermenting the leaves before firing while white tea is the least processed of all the teas, with it not being oxidized or rolled by instead, dried by steaming.

Anything that doesn't come from the *Camellia sinensis* plant is known as an herbal tea. Herbal teas contain herbs and spices that are often used for health purposes. Rooibos, which is the popular herbal tea, is also referred to as red tea, is full of polyphenols and flavonoids which help reduce cellular damage that is caused by free radicals which weaken natural defenses. Red tea also contains many beneficial vitamins and minerals and helps to reduce cramping and gas.

Other herbal tea blends are made for various symptoms such as PMS, energy, weight control, and detoxing. An herbal tea blend that is comprised of astragalus, cranberry, rooibos, and three types of Echinacea can help to support the body's natural defense system. Peppermint blend teas alleviate digestive disorders and insomnia, while Holy Basil tea helps to alleviate stress, lowers cortisol levels, and promotes a sense of well-being. All ingredients in an herbal tea have a purpose. The herbs and spices improve well-being and contribute to an active, balance, and healthy lifestyle.

A quality herbal tea looks at several aspects of the ingredients. Each herb is looked at for its medicinal value before being included in a tea. Higher quality herbs mean that a higher price is paid for the starting bulk materials, making the price of the finished tea product more expensive. Where the herbs are grown, how they are grown, and how they are harvested are all very important pieces of information to tea makers, who all want the best quality available for their tea formulas. The most important fact to tea makers is that the herbs are organic, and if they're not organic, that they are wild-crafted, meaning that they go through quality control procedures to make sure that there are no chemical pollutants, heavy metals, or toxins in them.

Finally, the cut of the herbs is also especially important when creating teas, with tea bag cut producing the most effective single serving healthful tea. A tea bag cut means that they are small enough to be broken down and extract all the valuable components are able to be extracted out of the herbs in the shortest amount of time. Herbs should also be large enough that they don't pass through the filter bag and leave residue in the cup. Herb quality and freshness is also very important, with the color of the herbs being vibrant and the smell obvious.

About the Author

More information on [herbal tea](#) is available at VitaNet ®, LLC Health Food Store. <http://vitanetonline.com/>

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