

National Hot Tea Month



In terms of popularity tea comes in second only to water as the most consumed beverage in the world. We drink massive amounts of tea annually for a variety of reasons. One, it is one of the oldest known drinks; discovered by accident in 2737 BC by Chinese Emperor Shen-Nung. Two, it grows all year long and in many different countries including Argentina, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Malawi, Sri Lanka, Australia, New Zealand, Tanzania, Taiwan and many more. Three, tea contains compounds that may be good for our health and other ingredients that make us feel good. And Four, there are so many ways to prepare it it's almost impossible to get tired of drinking it.

Let's look at the varieties and health benefits of tea.

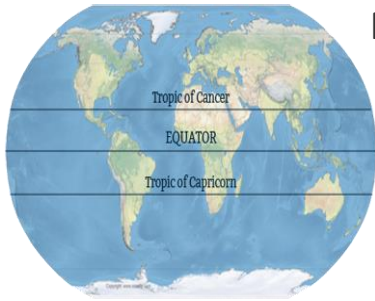
STEEPING ⌚ TIMES

 BLACK TEA 2-3 minutes	 OOLONG TEA 3 minutes
 GREEN TEA 2 minutes	 PU'ERH TEA 2-3 minutes
 WHITE TEA 4-5 minutes	 ROOIBOS TEA 4-6 minutes
 FRUIT TEA 4-5 minutes	 HERBAL TEA 4-5 minutes

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Varieties and Processing



Much of the world's tea is grown in the mountainous regions north and south of the equator known as the Tropic of Cancer and Tropic of Capricorn 3,000 – 7,000 feet above MSL (mean sea level). The mineral-rich and acidic soil found at this altitude and in these warm

climates make the perfect place to grow tea. The Chinese say that superior teas come from higher altitudes. Teas grown in the tropics can be harvested year round but some argue that tea from cooler climates make a richer tea of the finest quality. All teas come from a single plant species known as the *Camelia sinensis*. It is the processing of the tea leaves that determine the type, color and flavor of tea.



The age of the leaf, harvesting, the natural process of oxidation, and the amount of time they are in contact with oxygen, produce the different types of teas. The four main types of tea are: green tea, white tea, oolong tea and black tea. Green and white teas are not oxidized. White teas come from young leaves which are fired or steamed immediately after harvesting and then dried. Green teas are also fired or steamed prior to drying but then mechanically rolled. Oolong teas are partially oxidized which gives them an amber color. And Black teas are fermented and fully oxidized giving them a dark rich color.

Health Benefits



Tea contains flavonoids; naturally occurring compounds that have antioxidant properties. Catechins, a type of disease-fighting flavonoid and antioxidant, are the keys to tea's health benefits. Tea flavonoids often provide bioactive compounds that help to neutralize the free radicals

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which contribute to diseases in the body. They also help reduce damaged elements in the body such as genetic material and lipids. Another benefit found in tea is amino acids and caffeine which works synergistically to make us awake and alert, yet not feeling overly caffeinated.

Cardiovascular Health



Maintaining a healthy diet and regular exercise are key components to our cardiovascular health. Studies have shown that drinking tea may also support healthy circulation by improving blood vessel function. Black tea has been found to reduce blood pressure in some studies and in a 10-year study of more than 74,000 subjects, a relationship was found between drinking tea and a lowered risk of stroke. When four or more cups of tea per day were consumed there was a 21% reduction in the risk of stroke compared to those who did not drink tea.

Mental Health



The components of tea that support heart health may also improve brain health. The amino acid L-theanine can cross the blood-brain barrier potentially reducing mental and physical stress. Feelings of relaxation may be caused through increased levels of gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA), serotonin, dopamine and alpha wave activity. This is probably why green tea is consumed by Buddhist monks.

Metabolism Modulation

Metabolism Modulation In a meta-analysis of six research studies, 24-hour energy expenditure increased by 4.7% or 102 calories with a catechin-caffeine mixture. Fat oxidation increased during the same time revealing that tea may aid weight loss. Japanese researchers found that in a 12 week double-blind and placebo-controlled study, green tea catechins lead to a reduction in body fat, blood pressure and LDL-cholesterol compared to the control group.

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The suggestion is that green tea catechins may help prevent obesity and reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease.

Cancer Prevention



There are more than 3000 published studies evaluating the role of tea's compounds. Compounds such as EGCG, epigallocatechin gallate, may play a prevention role in various types of cancer. The research suggests that tea may help reduce cancer risk in a number of different ways.

- Reducing free radical and DNA damage.
- Inhibiting uncontrolled cell growth by promoting programmed cell death.
- Boosting the immune system to help fend off the development and promotion of cancer cells.

While the majority of clinical and human population studies on tea and cancer are related to green tea and green tea extract, emerging research suggests that black teas provide similar benefits.

Bone Health



Researchers have found that green tea may help to improve bone mineral density. Findings include improved bone building markers and muscle mass along with reduced risk of hip fractures. In addition to its health supporting benefits, there is no sodium, fat, carbonation or sugar in tea. It can even help to maintain proper fluid balance.

If you want the benefit of drinking tea studies suggest that you will need to consume at least three to five cups per day to get the best results. So, let's continue the practice of afternoon tea credited to Anna, Duchess of Bedford, who in 1840 began taking tea with a light snack around 4:00 p.m. to ward off that "sinking feeling."

At PBW we offer many different varieties of teas, in individual serving bags all the way up to bulk teas. This month save 20% on all teas, bulk and tea bags through 1/31/2018.