

# **Green Tea the New Fountain of Youth, Myth or Truth?**



**"Feel Young Again, Smarter & Full of  
Energy"....**

***by Terry Clark***

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### A Quick Guide to Processing and Preparation

You want to be healthy and beautiful. Most people think that the answer lies with pills and cosmetics, but this is not necessarily true. It is definitely a good idea to turn to the natural methods for maintaining your good health and looks. Drinking green tea is becoming increasingly popular due to the wide range of health benefits it offers. But do you know what it is and how it should be consumed? Read on to find out what green tea is exactly.

Green tea is made from the leaves of the plant *Camellia Sinensis*. The black tea is also made from them. The difference lies in the processing of the two. When the *Camellia Sinensis* leaves are picked for the production of green tea, they are processed with a technique called

firing. The fresh leaves are immediately heated or steamed after picking. Then they are dried. This is generally how green tea is made, even though in some cases further processing is necessary.

Black tea is made in a slightly different way. The fresh *Camellia Sinensis* leaves are dried using a technique called withering. With this method, the leaves are broken and rolled before they are dried. In this way, a chemical process called oxidation occurs. This does not happen with green tea. As a result, green tea preserves most of its beneficial chemical compounds - antioxidants, vitamins and minerals. Black tea, on the other hand, does not.

So green and black tea come from the same plant, but due to the specific processing green tea preserves its nutrients. You can buy the dried and processed product in a number of different forms. You can opt for the standard tea bags, which contain green tea. It is possible for you to get it in leaf form. You will find the dried leaves in a package. You can also get a brewed green tea beverage which is ready for drinking, or you can take green tea in the form of nutrition supplement pills.

There are different types of green tea that you can choose from on the market. They differ in terms of properties and taste. It is up to you to decide on the right green tea for you, depending on your preferences and requirements. Some of the most popular types of tea which can boast a wide range of health benefits and subtle taste include the traditional Macha and Sencha, popular in Japan and Longjing, which is typical for China.

Traditionally, the leaves of green tea are brewed in a specific way and the drink is then served. You will not regret it if you choose this form of preparation and serving instead of the standard tea bags. Of course, you will have to devote some time and effort to brewing. Green tea is prepared through steeping. Hence, you have to fill a tea strainer with the dried tea leaves. One teaspoon of green tea is enough for serving one cup. You have to be careful when boiling the water. You should bring it to the state right before boiling. Generally, the temperature of the water should not be more than 180 F (80 C). You have to place the tea strainer in a cup and then fill the cup with the hot water. You should steep the green tea leaves for no more than 2 or 3 minutes. Otherwise, the tannin present in the leaves will be released and the tea's taste will become bitter.

Serving green tea is often ceremonial, especially in Japan. You do not have to go to such great lengths. Still, in order to get the best taste and most beneficial results, you should let the brewed beverage cool down for a couple of minutes, before it is ready for consumption. Then you can enjoy its fresh and mild taste.

Scientists have found evidence that the consumption of green tea by the peoples of Southeast Asia has begun some 5,000 years ago. The drink is still extremely popular in these countries and is now gaining popularity in the West. You should definitely consider tasting green tea and drinking it on a daily basis. This will allow you to enjoy its numerous health benefits to the fullest.

## The Best Way to Brew Green Tea - How to Get All Benefits and Total Pleasure

Preparing and serving tea is more than just an everyday task in Asian countries. It is an entire ceremony. Thanks to the careful preparation of green tea, all its nutrients are better preserved. It is important for you to know how to brew the drink in order to get all its healthy benefits as well as the incomparable flavor. The preparation process is not rocket science and anyone can do it at home. The utensils you need are found in every home, so this should not be a problem either.

The best way to brew green tea is through steeping. This might sound way too common, but the key is in the details. In order to get the best results, you have to have the right ingredients and the right utensils. It is up to you to choose the green tea that you want to prepare. It is better to opt for loose leaves rather than tea bags. The former are usually fresher and have more beneficial nutrients.

The water you use for steeping the leaves is also important. The best choice is spring water. It is not abundantly mineralized, but it still contains a sufficient amount of minerals. These will add to the taste of the tea. Moreover, they will aid the processing of the beneficial green tea nutrients in your body.



You can use any type of kettle to boil the water for the green tea. You also need a tea strainer or a small sieve in which to put the dried leaves. You should use a porcelain tea pot for steeping. Any other type of container might affect the flavor of the drink. If you are making tea for yourself only, you can do the steeping in a tea cup.

The first thing to do when preparing green tea is to measure the amount of dried leaves that you need. The best choice would be to have 5 grams of leaves per 8 ounces of water. Generally, you can use one teaspoon of leaves for preparing one cup of tea. Still, keep in mind that the amount will depend on the leaf form. For instance, if the leaves are very small a teaspoon will probably contain a little bit more than 5 grams. If the leaves are larger, the quantity will measure be a little bit less. That is why, if you want to be precise you can consider using a scale for measuring the exact amount you need.

The next step for brewing green tea is to prepare the water. This has its specifics as well. You should bring the water to the point of boiling and then stop the process. It is easier to notice the moment when you are using a standard kettle, but you might have to get a little bit of practice, if you have an electric appliance. In any case, the temperature of the water should be between 170 and 180F (77 to 82C). Once the water is ready, you can pour it into the cup or teapot. Let it cool down for a minute or two. In this way, the water will reach the perfect temperature for green tea, which is between 160 and 170F (72 to 77C).

The next step is to put the tea strainer with the dried

leaves in the water. The steeping time is crucial for the flavor of green tea. The different varieties require different steeping times. Some leaves need to be steeped for just 30 seconds while others need 6 to 7 minutes. If there is no indication regarding the steeping time on the package of the tea, you should steep the leaves for anywhere between 2 and 3 minutes.

In addition, you might want to do some research on the sort of tea you are using. Another option is to rely on the trial and error method. The brewed green tea should have a very gentle taste much like pure water. It should not be bitter. If it tastes bitter you should reduce the steeping time until the drink tastes right.

After the seeping is complete, your green tea is ready for serving. It is best to let the beverage cool down for a couple of minutes before you drink it.

### Bought Green Tea vs. Home Brewed - Which Is the Better Choice?

The health benefits of green tea are widely known. It reduces your risk of heart disease, brain disease and cancer. It has an anti-aging action. It can kill viruses and bacteria in your body. It can be safely said that consuming green tea is the best natural way for preserving your good health. But there are so many products on the market claiming to offer all the wonderful health benefits.

Which is the right one? Is it better to rely on bought tea or to brew your own drink at home? It is worth taking into account the pros and cons for each type of product.

Traditionally, green tea is prepared through steeping the dried leaves in hot water. This is how the drink has been prepared and served for thousands of years in China and later on in the rest of Southeast Asia. This is how the people there consume the beverage to this day. Many researchers believe that the smaller number of Southeast Asian people that suffer from heart disease and other conditions like arthritis is due to the lifelong consumption of traditionally prepared green tea.

More importantly, the brewed drink is used for most trials on humans. Basically, the health benefits of green tea that researchers reveal are based on studies carried out with the traditional brewed beverage. Another important discovery which gives advantage of home brewed green tea over bought products is that the catechins - the most beneficial antioxidants in the drink - are most abundant in the freshly prepared beverage. The catechin molecules are very active, so once the drink is prepared they begin to bond with other molecules. In turn, as the time passes their concentration in green tea is slowly but steadily decreasing.

Based on all these facts, it can be said that the home brewed tea is better. However, this does not mean that the bought products do not contain sufficient amounts of catechins and other beneficial antioxidants. Quite the opposite, several studies have found substantial concentration of favorable

nutrients in some ready green tea drinks. The main problem with bought green tea is that it contains other ingredients, apart from green tea, which can reduce its beneficial effect and even be harmful to you. The sweeteners are commonly present in the ready beverages. These automatically increase the calorie count, which equals zero in home brewed green tea. This means that the weight loss aiding properties of green tea are diminished significantly.

The presence of artificial preservatives in bought green tea is not uncommon. Even though some manufacturers use ascorbic acid, known as Vitamin C, not of them all rely on this natural chemical compound. Usually, the artificial preservatives are not harmful to the body, since they have a very small concentration in the drink. However, when you consume the ready-made green tea product on a daily basis as recommended, these chemical compounds might compile in your body and you might experience a negative side effect.

Some bought green tea products contain larger amounts of caffeine than the traditional home brewed beverage. This is not necessarily a problem if you are a healthy individual. On the contrary, you might experience an even more beneficial effect. However, for some people, such as children and the elderly, the higher concentration of caffeine can have harmful effects, like increased pulse, higher blood pressure and insomnia.

The main advantage of bought green tea over home brewed is that it is much more convenient to use. You do not have to go through boiling the water and steeping the leaves. All you have to do is open the bottle or can and enjoy the drink.

The taste should be pleasant, even though it will not be the same as the one of the home brewed beverage. If you get a bottled or canned drink, make sure it is fresh and unsweetened.

Overall, you should definitely consider drinking home brewed green tea. It has a higher concentration of the beneficial catechins. Its taste is traditional. It also has the incomparable green tea aroma. Still, when you cannot steep some leaves at home, you can readily get a bottled drink. The important thing is to be aware of its properties, its beneficial effects and its potential side effects.

### Can Green Tea Make You Smarter?

You have probably heard about the powerful chemical compounds in green tea. You know that they can protect you from getting cancer and from heart disease. The antioxidants even slow aging and this is yet another great benefit. But can green tea make you smarter?

You have probably never asked yourself this question, because it seems impossible for a single plant to have such an all-encompassing effect. The truth is that green tea can stimulate brain activity. In turn, this allows you to concentrate, become more alert and think more clearly.

Your brain can work on different wavelengths, depending on

the physical and emotional state you are in. When your brain is on alpha wavelength it is in a more relaxed and more alert state at the same time. When you are stressed, the beta wavelength takes over. In this state, it is harder for you to focus on a subject and to think clearly.

Green tea contains a powerful substance, an amino acid called L-theanine, in very large quantities. This amino acid affects the activity of the neurons in the brain which are responsible for the transmission of nerve signals. The effect is beneficial because the alpha brain wave activity is increased. Basically, green tea stimulates your brain to work on alpha wavelength. This has an extremely wide range of benefits.

The alpha brain waves help you solve problems more quickly and effectively. They allow the two hemispheres of the brain to sort of communicate better with each other. In turn, your brain will work more effectively. The alpha brain waves stimulate creativity as well. This is invaluable in any problem solving process.

Apart from alertness, the alpha brain wave activity stimulated by green tea allows you to be more relaxed. The stress, fear and anxiety and even depression are reduced naturally. This will help you concentrate even better on your tasks. In addition, as your mind is more relaxed your body organs and systems will function optimally. This gives green tea yet another health benefit.

When your brain is in an alpha state its ability to perceive

and store information is naturally increased. This means that it will be easier for you to learn and memorize new things. This is beneficial not only to students, but to any person who works with large volumes of information.

Overall, green tea can make you smarter in a number of ways, as it increases the alpha wavelength activity of the brain.

### Different Green Tea Products - Discover Your Options to Make the Right Choice

There is no doubt that the moderate and regular consumption of green tea is beneficial. The health benefits are many and varied. They affect your body as well as your mind. Apart from being healthier, you will be more beautiful as well. The only question which remains is - how to choose between the different green tea products?

Before choosing a product, you have to know how green tea is made. This tea is made from the plant *Camellia Sinensis*. Its leaves are picked and dried immediately. A specific technique called firing is used. It allows for the preservation of all beneficial chemical compounds inside the green tea leaves. There are different sorts of *Camellia Sinensis* coming from the different parts of China and Japan. Hence, you can expect each type of green tea to have its specific taste. In addition, its medicinal properties may vary slightly.

For this reason, before purchasing any type of green tea product, it is worth enquiring about the sort of *Camellia Sinensis* it is made from. If you want to be an even more knowledgeable buyer, you can make an inquiry about the precise way in which the leaves are picked and processed. This is a good idea since these factors also determine the taste and properties of the actual product you will use. For instance, if the leaves are picked earlier, they contain more caffeine and vice versa.

The most common green tea products, which can be found in every supermarket, are the packs of green tea bags. Usually, you will find products labeled "green tea" without the specific sort of *Camellia Sinensis* used for the preparation being mentioned. Still, it is possible to find some teas made from a specific sort. There is nothing wrong with preparing the brewed beverage using tea bags. The important thing for the ingredient inside is to be fresh and to provide light and fresh taste along with rich grassy aroma.

Even though the tea bags can provide you with the all the benefits of green tea, you should definitely consider getting some amount of green leaves that do not come packaged in bags. These products have more benefits. Firstly, you will have a much greater choice in terms of variety. There are numerous kinds of green tea, which come from the different parts of China and Japan and are processed in different ways. You can opt for some exotic varieties, which are traditional in these Asian countries, such as Dragonwell, Gunpowder, Gyokuro and Macha. You can also opt for a type of Indian green tea. It is possible to get an organic product as well.



Another benefit of loose green tea is that it is usually fresher than the one sold in bags. This makes it more delicious as well as more beneficial. In addition, with the unpaged green tea, you can follow the precise traditional instructions for brewing and steeping.

The ready green tea beverages have beneficial effects similar to the ones of the home brewed leaves. However, they cannot have the same fresh taste and aroma. Moreover, some manufacturers put different additives inside the drinks. These can be sweeteners or preservatives. Hence, you should opt for the brewed drinks, even though you can grab a bottle of ready green tea if you are in a hurry.

The green tea dietary supplements have become increasingly popular. These are made from the dried *Camellia Sinensis* leaves, which are granulated in capsules. These supplements also have the medicinal properties of green tea. Still, their effect will depend on the amount and type of extract used for their making. Generally, if you find it more convenient to opt for supplements, you should look for ones with standardized extracts. In addition, it is best to opt for a product from a reputable manufacturer. This will guarantee you that the pills do not contain contaminants, which can be dangerous.

If you find that caffeine affects you negatively, you can always opt for a decaffeinated green tea product of any type. Still, you have to keep in mind that caffeine has a wide range of health benefits as well. Hence, if you are

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