

## Herbal Tea– A Cup of Good Health

By

Dr. Aparna Pradhan

[aparna.amit@gmail.com](mailto:aparna.amit@gmail.com)

### Abstract

Herbal tea also called tisane have their roots in Ayurveda and have been used for centuries to treat various ailments. Ranging from physical to mental wellbeing; the tea is a boon for health and beauty. Loaded with antioxidants and vitamins; they are known for their anti-aging and anti-inflammatory properties. Herbal teas help in fighting disease and infections and lower the risk of chronic disease. A steaming hot cup of herbal tea can be great during periods of stress and anxiety.

### Keywords

Herbal tea, Tisane, Herbal Infusion, Different parts of plants, Infusion, Decoction

### Introduction

Herbal tea is a tasty and healthy way to feel refreshed. Thanks to its soothing nature and health benefits, it has become a popular drink all over the world. The origin of tisanes dates back to Ancient Egypt and China where they were used to treat illness or alleviate their symptoms. Known for their health benefits, herbal teas have been used for treating various ailments due to their medicinal properties.

## Tisane vs Tea

Despite its name, Herbal tea is not a true tea. Surprised! Real tea comes from an evergreen plant - *Camellia Sinensis* (tea plant) which is native to Asia.

Infusion or decoction made by using herbs other than tea plant – *Camellia sinensis* is referred to as herbal tea also called Tisane. Tisanes are not made from the *Camellia sinensis*. Instead, herbal infusions or decoctions made from different parts of the plants such as leaves, flowers, seeds, fruits, bark or root with hot water is what we drink as Tisanes.

## Types of Herbal Tea

Herbal teas are categorized according to the part of the plant used for preparing tea.

- Leaf tisanes: Lemongrass, lemon balm, mint, tulsi
- Flower tisanes: Chamomile, rose, hibiscus (china rose)
- Fruit tisanes: apple, raspberry
- Spice/seeds tisane: cardamom, fennel, coriander, caraway, cumin
- Bark tisane: Cinnamon
- Root tisanes: Ginger, chicory

A single herb or blend of a few different herbs can be used together for preparing tisanes.

Sometimes two or more parts are blended together to make tisanes e.g. Ginger Cinnamon

Tea is a blend of root and bark.

## Health Benefits

The wide range of health benefits of herbal teas are as follows:

- Uplifts the spirits and energy levels and boosts wellness

- Rejuvenates and refreshes
- Promotes brain functions
- Help achieve calm and relaxed state of mind
- Anti-aging properties due to high antioxidant levels that help in eliminating the free radicals.
- Soothing effect on the digestive system
- Natural sedative and soothes the nerves.
- Relieve stress and anxiety
- Helps in detoxifying, de-stressing, and relaxing
- Aid to ward off insomnia
- Good for the skin
- Boosts and strengthens the immune system

### **Preparing basic herbal tea**

Using tender parts of the plant such as leaves and flowers, herbal tea is prepared by infusion. Herbal tea prepared from roots, bark, and berries requires herbs to be boiled in water for a longer time. Some teas have a short brewing time.

### **Infusion**

- Boil water and pour over the herbs. For every cup of water take 1 heaped teaspoon of dried herbs/ 1 heaped tablespoon of fresh herbs.
- Steep for 10 minutes, strain and serve the infusion hot.
- For added flavor stir in lemon or honey.

## Decoction

- Add herbs to the water and bring the water to a boil. Reduce heat. Let it simmer for 15-20 minutes.
- Strain and drink hot.
- Herbal tea prepared by decoction tastes better with lemon or honey.
- Iced herbal tea can be made by adding ice to the hot infusion or decoction.

## Tips

- Do not steep for a longer time as it may turn unpleasant or bitter.
- Use more herb for Iced tea.

## Safety Alerts

- Those on medication must consult their doctor before taking herbal tea.
- Avoid taking stored ones.
- Pregnant women should avoid herbal teas.
- Avoid using aluminium vessels for preparing tea. Since it is a very reactive metal, it may react with the herb.



**Image 1: Herbal Tea**

## POPULAR TISANES

Huge array of delectable flavors of herbal teas are available in the market. Popular herbal teas are chamomile, peppermint, ginger, lemongrass, cinnamon, liquorice, cardamom, basil, mint, cardamom, ginseng, and chicory. Every tea is unique in its fragrance, flavor, and health benefits.

### Chamomile Tea

Known for its calming and soothing properties, Chamomile tea is one of the most sought-after herbal teas. It has a sweet, pleasant, and delicate taste.

It works wonders on people suffering from nervous tension and anxiety. A natural sedative, it soothes the nerves and helps relieve stress and anxiety. Unwind over a cup of tea at the end of a long hectic stressful day and feel relaxed and de-stressed. Herbal experts believe that it can cure insomnia and aid in sleeping well.

The anti-inflammatory and anti-spasmodic properties make this tea an effective way to get relief from headaches, migraines, and cramps.

Prepare Chamomile tea by pouring hot water over 2 teaspoons of dried Chamomile flowers per cup and steeping for 5 minutes.

### Tips

- Cooled tea bags can be used for relieving skin irritation and inflammation.
- Add few cups of chamomile tea to bath water for a refreshing and relaxed feeling.

## Safety Alerts

- Talk to your doctor if you are on any medication.
- People allergic to pollens should not consume chamomile tea.
- Those on blood thinner medication should avoid chamomile tea.
- Pregnant females should not consume chamomile tea.

## Ginger Tea

A piping hot cup of ginger tea daily is perfect for good health. It is an age-old remedy for curing a cold, blocked sinus, and sore throat. Ginger tea, rich in phytonutrients and antioxidants has anti-cancer, anti-inflammatory, and immune-stimulating properties.

Research highlights the herb's potential in fighting cancer – breast cancer, prostate cancer, and digestive tract cancers. The active compounds 6-gingerol and 6-shogaol exhibit anti-cancer properties against gastrointestinal tract cancers.

Ginger tea has been valued for treating stomach ailments, nausea, sore throat, liver problems, asthma and rheumatism and travel sickness.

## How to Prepare Ginger Tea

Wash thoroughly 2” ginger root. Peel, grate or crush ginger root and boil in water in a covered pan. Reduce the heat and simmer for 10-15 minutes. Strain and serve hot.

For sore throat, sinusitis, and cold - Add 1 tablespoon honey and 1 tablespoon lemon juice to the hot decoction. Honey will help soothe the irritated throat; lemon and ginger will help in clearing blocked sinus.



**Image 2: Ginger Tea**

### **Peppermint Tea**

Peppermint tea, a popular herbal tea known for its wonderful aroma and cooling effect has been used for centuries to alleviate stomach pain and treat digestive problems like constipation, indigestion and irritable bowel syndrome.

Menthol - an essential oil in peppermint helps in easing out nausea, headaches, stomach cramps and menstrual cramps. Good for keeping morning sickness at bay. Perfect for maintaining oral health. A hot cup of tea can be a boon during the period of stress and anxiety.

Peppermint tea – Pour a cup of boiling water over two tablespoons of fresh mint leaves. Steep for 10 minutes. Strain and serve hot. Sweeten with honey.

Iced Peppermint tea – Add lemon juice, honey, a cup of cold water, and few ice cubes to the infusion. Refrigerate for an hour and serve chilled tea.



**Image 3: Peppermint Tea**

### **Lemongrass Tea**

Lemongrass tea prepared by infusion of leaves is loaded with the goodness of cancer-fighting compound-citral. The infusion detoxifies the body and helps in cleansing the toxins from the body. It improves skin health. This tea is diuretic i.e. increases the frequency of urination and is good in treating water retention. Those trying to lose weight can benefit by taking this herbal infusion but remember not to exceed four cups a day.

The wonderful aroma of the tea has a relaxing and calming effect on the body. It helps in uplifting the spirits and de-stressing. The tea can benefit people suffering from anxiety and depression. A cup of tea before sleeping can ensure sound sleep.

### **Safety Alerts**

- Pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers should avoid it.



## Cinnamon Tea

Cinnamon Tea is a wonderful drink for those trying to lose weight as it boosts the metabolism. It strengthens the immune system and improves glucose metabolism. The anti-inflammatory properties of cinnamon tea can give some relief to people suffering from chronic inflammation and arthritis. The tea can benefit diabetics as it has been shown to improve glucose metabolism in type 2 diabetes patients. The cholesterol and triglyceride lowering effects have also been documented. It is good for the digestive system and gives relief from bloating and flatulence.

### Safety Alerts

- Those on blood-thinning medication or having bleeding disorder should abstain from drinking cinnamon tea.
- Pregnant and nursing mothers should avoid cinnamon tea.

Cinnamon tea is prepared by decoction. Add honey to sweeten the tea.

### Best Types of Herbal Teas and Their Health Benefits

- Herbal Tea for Anxiety- Chamomile, peppermint, lemongrass, and lemon balm tea.
- Herbal Tea to aid sleep- Chamomile, lemongrass
- Herbal Tea to fight cancer- Ginger tea
- Herbal Tea for constipation- Ginger, dandelion, liquorice, peppermint
- Herbal Tea for weight loss- Cinnamon
- Herbal Tea for cough and cold- Ginger, ginger-cinnamon tea, marshmallow, Tulsi

## Conclusion

The fragrant aroma, natural taste, and health benefits make herbal teas a wonderful beverage for beauty and good health. They are healthy drinks that can be enjoyed throughout the year but remember moderation is the key to good health.

## References

- [www.webmed.com](http://www.webmed.com)
- [www.verywellhealth.com](http://www.verywellhealth.com)
- [sciencedirect.com](http://sciencedirect.com)
- Egyptian Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences
- [www.completewellbeing.com](http://www.completewellbeing.com)
- [pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](http://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov): Cancer preventive properties of ginger – a brief review
- Images from [pixabay.com](http://pixabay.com)

## About the Author

Dr Aparna Pradhan, doctorate in Zoology is an artist, a freelance writer and a poetess. She has published articles in leading newspapers and magazines. Her poems have been published in International and National magazines, Hindi and English anthologies.

Life size posters showcasing her poem have been erected by Government of Goa at various public places to create awareness on importance of trees in saving Mother Earth and environment.



She is an established artist and has exhibited her works in National and International Exhibitions. Her works adorn the walls of Raj Bhawan, Goa and prestigious houses in India and abroad.

