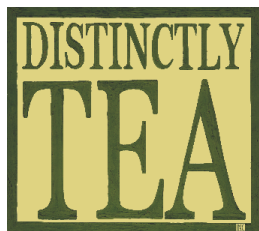


Yerba Mate

Distinctly Tea Inc.



Mate; Chimarrao; Ilex;
Jesuit's Tea; Paraguay Tea
Ilex paraguariensis

Available in:
-dried leaf
-powdered extract 10 : 1



Yerba mate is a member of the holly family, long consumed in South America not only for its medicinal benefits but most often as a social past-time, much like we gather for coffee. Mate (as it is known in Argentina) or Chimarrao (as it is known in Brazil) has its own ceremony of preparation when friends meet. The leaves are dried and sometimes roasted, then added to a hollowed out gourd (often adorned with silver rims and feet). Cool water is added, hot water follows, and then there is a process of tipping the gourd so that the leaves are banked in a certain way against the side of the vessel. The beverage is consumed through a *bombilla* or *bomba* (a metal straw with a filter at the end), with the person who prepared the mate taking the first sip (as it is supposed to be the least pleasant part of the drink) and then passing the gourd and bombilla around to everyone at the table. Water is continually added to the gourd until everyone has had enough. The gathering ends with everyone saying *gracias* to the host. Common today throughout South America and exported world-wide, mate traces its roots back several centuries. Legend has it that the peaceful Guarani Tribe of Paraguay were the first to harvest the wild leaves and drink Mate as a medicinal tea. It was used to sustain and nourish, to slow aging, stimulate the mind, suppress the appetite, and alleviate symptoms of disease. When the Spanish Jesuit priests came to South America in the mid-1600's, they also were introduced to this stimulating healthy tea and plantations were established, making it even more popular throughout South America—although it never really took on in Europe because by this time, coffee and tea were already well-known.

A cup of mate packs quite a caffeine punch—and although there is slightly less per cup as compared to an equal amount of coffee, the traditional way of drinking the mate (namely, repeatedly refilling the gourd to make multiple infusions) guarantees substantially more caffeine than your average cup of joe. Thus it is often used to relieve mental and physical fatigue, as well as for improving one's mood. The caffeine in mate is due to large amounts of xanthenes present: this class of compounds includes theobromine and theophylline, as well as caffeine. The combined effect of these xanthenes is to stimulate the body, cause vasodilation (therefore lowering blood pressure is not entirely uncommon over a long period of time), and to act as a muscle relaxant and diuretic. It is also a laxative in large amounts. The caffeine component may also speed up one's metabolism and indeed, yerba mate is being investigated as a weight loss aid. Its thermogenic effects are related to the inhibition of pancreatic lipase (which is related to lipid digestion in the body), activation of AMPK and electron transport uncoupling. It is also thought that mate causes heat to be more rapidly dissipated from the body, thus burning additional calories. Other animal studies suggest mate to be protective against the ill-effects of a high-fat diet. Analyses of yerba mate have revealed this beverage to be very high in polyphenols and possess an even greater antioxidant capacity than green tea. Thus, there is potential for mate to be considered as an anti-cancer agent, as well as to slow the signs of aging (lending scientific credibility to the traditional claims). In particular the cholorogenic acid, found in high amounts in mate, has a special affinity for reducing oxidative stress on the heart and liver. Animal studies have shown that mate actually increase the body's resistance to DNA strand breakage due to free-radical damage and to speed up the repair of already broken strands, irrespective of the dose administered. Recent studies have also found yerba mate to be anti-mutagenic. Not only that, but the high content of saponins that cause the slightly "green" and bitter taste are purported to have hypocholesterolemic effects, whereby the formation of micelles that cannot be absorbed (thus must be excreted) and the inhibition of colic acid's passive diffusion may actually lower cholesterol levels. It also works well in conjunction with statin medications. The saponins are also antiparasitic. Yerba mate may also be an effective alternative method to treat the skin fungus *Malassezia furfur* that causes seborrheic dermatitis, pityriasis versicolor, and dandruff in humans. The standard antifungal treatment for a prolonged course of medications is quite expensive, while mate may be as effective as 2.7 microg/ml of ketoconazole. Some people also use mate as a mild analgesic for rheumatic complaints as well as headaches.

Adding to this long list of benefits, yerba mate is sometimes called "the liquid vegetable" because it contains a number of vitamins and minerals in amounts not commonly found in other foods. Among these nutrients are chromium, copper, iron, manganese, nickel, potassium, zinc, phosphorus, calcium, thiamine (vitamin B1), riboflavin (vitamin B2), vitamin C, and vitamin E. Drink a cup (or three) and see if you feel more refreshed!

To prepare mate as a tea, allow one teaspoon per person per cup. Pour hot water over leaves (not boiling water, this will make the tea bitter!) and let steep for 5-7 minutes. At least 3-4 infusions of mate can be made with the same leaves. The powdered extract may be mixed with cold or hot water (1 teaspoon of extract per 8 oz. water), or added into yogurt, smoothies etc. The traditional method of drinking mate is with a bombilla in a cured gourd. There is a ritual in preparing it—with several regional variations—but the basic method is to add the leaves to the gourd, and cover with cold water, followed by hot water and allowing the mixture to steep. Water is repeatedly added and the gourd is shared among friends.

Please see reverse for contraindications and additional information

YERBA MATE SHOULD NOT BE CONSUMED BY PEOPLE WITH CAFFEINE SENSITIVITIES. THERE IS A RISK OF OVERDOSING WITH ANY CAFFEINE-CONTAINING PRODUCT, SO PLEASE CONSUME SENSIBLY. SIDE EFFECTS OF CAFFEINE OVERDOSE MAY INCLUDE TACHYCARDIA, HEADACHE, ANXIETY, AGITATION, SLEEP DISTURBANCES AND WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOMS ETC. EXERCISE CAUTION WHEN CONSUMING MATE WITH OTHER CAFFEINE-CONTAINING PRODUCTS, STIMULANTS, AND STIMULATING HERBS (EPHEDRA, AMPHETAMINES, COCAINE, GUARANA, COCOA, COFFEE, BLACK TEA, BITTER ORANGE ETC.). CAFFEINE CLEARANCE MAY BE ALTERED (AND SERUM LEVELS OF CAFFEINE IN THE BODY INCREASED) IF TAKING MATE IN CONJUNCTION WITH ALCOHOL, CIMETIDINE, ORAL CONTRACEPTIVES, CLOZAPINE, DISULFIRUM, ESTROGENS, FLUCONAZOLE, FLUVOXAMINE, LITHIUM, MEXILETINE, NICOTINE, QUINOLONE ANTIBIOTICS, RILUZOLE, TERBINAFINE, THEOPYLLINE, AND VERAPAMIL. AS WITH ANY HOT BEVERAGE, THERE IS AN INCREASED RISK OF CERTAIN ORAL, THROAT, ESOPHAGEAL AND LUNG CANCERS IF THIS BEVERAGE IS CONSUMED FOR LONG PERIODS OF TIME AT VERY HIGH TEMPERATURES, ESPECIALLY IF USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH TOBACCO AND ALCOHOL (LET IT COOL A BIT BEFORE DRINKING!). THERE ARE NO INCREASED RISKS FOR THESE CANCERS IF MATE IS CONSUMED COLD. THERE IS A THEORETICAL RISK OF BLEEDING IF CONSUMING MATE ALONG WITH ANTICOAGULANT/ANTIPLATELET MEDICATIONS FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF TIME. EXERCISE CAUTION IF CONSUMING MATE WITH EPHEDRA AND CREATINE (AS AN ATHLETIC ENHANCEMENT PRODUCT) AS THIS MAY INCREASE THE RISK OF ADVERSE EVENTS AND ALSO MAY REDUCE THE BENEFITS OF CREATINE IN THE BODY. EXERCISE CAUTION IF TAKING ANTI-DIABETES, MONOAMINE OXIDASE INHIBITORS (MAO'S), AND PHENYLPROPANOLAMIN AS BLOOD GLUCOSE CONCENTRATION MAY BE ALTERED.

For educational purposes only. This information has not been evaluated by the Canadian Food & Drug Administration. This information is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.

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