

September 2012

Steeped!



Camellia Sinensis— An Overview

Traditional teas are processed in a variety different ways to create extremely different beverages. Here's a quick look at some of the differences and how these teas can be good for your health.

Black Tea: Black tea is the most common tea in the western hemisphere. Over 90 per cent of the tea consumed in the western hemisphere is black tea. All black teas are fully oxidized. A good cup of black tea can range in taste from sweet to spicy or even smoky, so there are a lot of different varieties to choose from. Black teas are one of the most processed teas, but don't think that there aren't any health benefits! Black teas have been known to help lower cholesterol, prevent cancer and help strengthen the immune system.

Oolong Tea: Probably the most varied tea category, oolongs sit in between black and green teas. The leaves are oxidized, but only partially. The amount of oxidation relates directly to the flavour of the tea. These teas are highly sought out among connoisseurs, and have the most complex flavour palette. There are literally thousands of different styles and grades of oolong tea. Oolongs are known for all the things listed about black tea plus the added benefit of burning fat and helping prevent osteoporosis.

Green Tea: Green tea is the most commonly consumed tea in China and Japan. It has a very vegetal taste, but can vary in flavour from sweet to astringent. As of late, green tea has been touted as THE get healthy drink of the times. Green tea lowers blood pressure as well as doing all the things that oolong and black teas do! It's also great to add to a weight loss regimen. If you want an extra antioxidant kick, try matcha, a green tea product made of fine quality leaves that have been ground into a powder and is mixed with hot water.

White tea: Probably the least consumed tea in North America, white tea should not be written off. For people wanting a nice drink in the evening, white tea offers a low-caffeine alternative. It's a delicate and sweet tea with a lot of underlying complexity. Once again, white tea holds all of the same benefits as the ones above, but it also carries with it antibacterial properties as well as having even more antioxidants than green tea. If you're looking for something with slightly more body, also try yellow teas, which are very similar to white teas in both flavour and production, though they do carry some green tea characteristics as well.

Pu-erh Tea: Pu-erh is fermented tea usually packed in cakes and aged over a long period of time. Cakes of Pu-erh can be aged over decades. It has an earthy, full taste with a smooth finish. These teas are known for promoting longevity as well as lowering blood pressure. They have also been suggested as a diet tea.



Above: These jars are beautifully decorated in 4 patterns: blue Polka dot, pretty Red Apple, best selling Blue daisy or delicate Trailing Lily.

Save 10% on Sauerkraut crock pots

This month we feature our newly arrived large (7 litre/ 2 gal) SAUERKRAUT CROCKS. Do not let the name fool you - this big jar is suitable for many marinating purposes: cabbage, pumpkins, carrot, beans, celery, onions, peppers even brandied fruit! If pickling is not your favourite fall activity, use it as a decoration! It will look impressive on any kitchen counter.

The rim and lid of the crock are specifically designed to keep the pickling process clean : the lid fits into a shallow round groove that, when filled with water, eliminates mould and allows fermentation gasses to escape without letting air enter the crock pot. In just 4-6 weeks you can have delicious sauerkraut and other vegetables. This big jar is glazed all around for easy cleaning. Ask for a copy of a pickling recipe at the store!

Try Genmaicha!

This Japanese green tea is like nothing you've ever tasted before. High quality Bancha is mixed with toasted rice to create a nutty and flavourful beverage. It pairs extremely well with Asian cuisine both savoury and sweet. Be sure to try it with the recipe below!



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Lemongrass ginger udon fry-up!

With school starting up, everyone's schedule just got a bit busier. For those nights when you're trying to squeeze a nice, balanced meal in between the end of your child's school day and the next band practice, here's a great option that puts a nice twist on pasta! It's also very cost-effective, so you can save up your cash for those instrument repairs! It's a one-pot wonder.

Ingredients:

- 1/3 cup canola oil
- 1/2 cup low sodium soy sauce
- 1/2 cup rice vinegar
- 1-1/2 tbsp. brown sugar
- 1/2 tsp. ground ginger (found at Distinctly Tea)
- 1/2 tsp. organic lemongrass powder (found at Distinctly Tea)
- 1/2 tsp. granulated garlic
- 1 cup broccoli florets
- 1 cup cauliflower
- 1 cup chopped carrot
- 1 cup bean sprouts
- 1/4 cup chopped cilantro
- 1/2 cup scallions
- 1-10 oz package of udon noodles
- 3/4 c chopped peanuts or cashews (optional)
- lemon



Directions:

Mix together the first seven ingredients to create a sauce. Spoon about four tablespoons into a deep hot skillet. Sauté the cauliflower, broccoli and carrot until slightly softened. Add about two thirds of the remaining sauce to the pan and add udon noodles and cilantro. Sauté until they are heated through, about four minutes. In the last minute of cooking, add the bean sprouts and scallions. If you're looking for a bit of extra protein, chopped nuts make a great garnish for this dish. Squeeze a bit of fresh lemon over the pasta and serve.

Tips and tricks:

This recipe lends itself well to modification. Experiment with your own veggies or add in some protein. Chicken or shrimp work well, but if you want to keep it vegetarian, a little bit of marinated (in the sauce) tofu or some fried tempeh is a great addition.