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tea health facts

answers about black tea / green tea / white tea / rooibos / infusions

Black tea accounts for approximately 72% of total consumed tea in the world, green

tea accounts for approximately 26% with the remaining 2% being herbal infusions.

where does black and green tea come from?

Both black and green teas come from the leaves of the *Camellia sinensis* plant, it is the processing that the leaves undergo to make the final tea that makes them different. The leaves of the black tea are fully oxidised while those for green

teas are lightly steamed before being dried. Most black teas come from plantations in Africa, India, Sri Lanka and Indonesia, whereas green teas mostly come from China and Japan.

antioxidant levels in black v green tea

Black and green teas contain similar amounts of antioxidants, called flavonoids, but they differ in chemical structure. Green teas contain more of the simple flavonoids called catechins, while the

oxidisation process for black tea converts simple flavonoids to more complex ones. For more on antioxidants go to our "Answers on Antioxidants" factsheet.

what is white tea?

White tea is rarer than other teas and can only be plucked once a year. These teas are produced using only the first bud and top leaf from the new season's tea bush. White tea got

its name due to the fine white downy hairs that covers the first bud. These teas are very pale in colour, light and delicate in taste. The best come from the Fujian province in China.

oolong tea

Oolong tea is best described as being between green and black tea. Where tea leaves are fully oxidised to make black tea and non-oxidised to make green tea, they are partially oxidised to make oolong tea. Oolong originated from

the Fujian province of China and later started being produced in Taiwan. There are two types of oolong, the difference in colour and taste correlating to the amount of time the tea leaves take to oxidise.

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what is rooibos?

Rooibos (red bush) tea is a natural herb unique to the Cederberg Mountains of the Western Cape of South Africa, and has been a favourite drink of South Africans for centuries. Rooibos is packed with antioxidants, but they differ from those in other teas. Rooibos has a specific flavonoid called aspalathin of which Rooibos

is the only known natural source. Rooibos is naturally sweet, contains zero calories, is caffeine free and is high in minerals. South African mothers have long given Rooibos to their babies because it is thought to contain natural healing and calming properties.

what are infusion teas made of?

Fruit and herbal teas contain no actual tea leaves as such, but are infusions made of chunks of aromatic fruits, herbs, roots and flowers. In

summer they are especially refreshing to serve on ice or chilled. Infusions are naturally caffeine free so are ideal for children, or as a night-time drink.

which tea is best for my health?

All tea, drunk in moderation, is good for health and well being. The decision about which to drink is simply a matter of taste. Drunk on its own

tea has no calories and provides a number of valuable vitamins and minerals.

how to maximise the antioxidants in tea



It is also interesting to note that antioxidant levels in tea are greatly reduced in the decaffeination process.

So although de-caffeinated blends of tea have less caffeine they also have less of the valuable antioxidants.

¹ **Tea and Antioxidant Properties:** <http://www.tea.co.uk/healthresources.php>

² **Flavonoid Info:** <http://flavo.vit.fi/roleofflavonoids.htm#antioxidants>