



TEA TIME

Tea is steeped in health and performance benefits.

BY MATTHEW KADEY, R.D.

According to Chinese legend, the story of tea began on a blustery day in 2737 B.C. when Emperor Shen Nung was unwinding under a wild tea tree. A gust of wind sent a few leaves drifting down into his cup of hot water. He took a sip and the rest is history. Tea is hot—and getting hotter, with sales reaching \$2 billion in 2013. Its popularity is being spurred on by a raft of research showing that sipping the ancient brew and its payload of antioxidants is associated with better health and even some performance perks for athletes. Plus, tea is a great way to bolster your hydration sans sugary calories or the jitters. All true tea (as opposed to herbal varieties) comes from one plant: *Camellia sinensis*. Here are the best to brew.

Matcha is a Japanese tea made when the leaves are ground into a fine powder. So when you drink matcha, you're consuming the full leaf as opposed to just steeping it. The upshot is that you take in an antioxidant windfall. Outside of the mug, matcha powder can be added to smoothies, baked goods, pancakes, DIY energy bars and chia puddings.

Sip it:
Aiya Matcha To Go Stick-Packs (\$19, AiyaMatcha.com)

Oolong teas come from larger *Camellia sinensis* leaves, which are then semi-oxidized to various degrees using heat. Like other teas, oolong is a source of theanine, an amino acid that crosses the blood-brain barrier where it can have a calming and memory-boosting influence while helping athletes also improve focus.

Sip it:
The Republic of Tea Milk Oolong FullLeaf (\$14, Republicoftea.com)

White tea is often produced when immature leaves (buds) of the tea plant are picked and then air dried. Since it's the least processed of teas, white tea is believed to be particularly plush in antioxidants such as catechins, which have been shown to help abate muscle damage associated with training. Those who find green tea too grassy will likely enjoy the "softer" flavor of this tea.

Sip it:
Davidson's Organic Silver Needles (\$22, Davidsonstea.com)

Green tea is made from more mature tea leaves than white tea, which are lightly processed using either steam heat or dry heat (pan firing). Common types include gunpowder, sencha and jasmine, all with their own flavor nuances. Some data suggests that the antioxidants in green tea can help enhance the fat-burning potential of exercise.

Sip it:
The Republic of Tea The People's Green Tea (\$10, Republicoftea.com)

Black tea is conceived when tea leaves are fully oxidized, changing them from green to coppery-red and imbuing the brew with a bolder flavor. Varieties include Earl Grey, Assam, Darjeeling, lapsang souchong (smoked) and ceylon. While most research has focused on green tea, compounds in this British favorite have been shown to lower blood pressure numbers, thereby helping fend off coronary woes.

Sip it: *Arbor Teas Organic Golden Yunnan* (\$14, ArborTeas.com)

Originating in China's Yunnan province, **pu-erh** is made when tea leaves are allowed to ferment, giving this tea a robust, earthy flavor that will appease coffee and scotch drinkers. Since it's fermented, pu-erh may supply beneficial bacteria for better immune and digestive health.

Sip it:
Numi Emperor's Organic Pu-erh (\$9, Numitea.com)

BEST BUZZ

The dose of caffeine in tea can vary from 15 to 70 milligrams in an 8-ounce serving. For a more intense workout jolt, turn to coffee (100 to 200 milligrams per cup) or caffeine-enhanced products like Froosh energy mints and GU Espresso Love gel.

Tea Time THESE ITEMS MAKE IT EASIER THAN EVER TO TEA UP.

SWEET LEAF LEMON & LIME UNSWEET BOTTLED TEA

(Sweetleaftea.com)
More exciting than plain-jane water without the sugar deluge.



SKRATCH LABS WITH MATCHA AND LEMONS EXERCISE HYDRATION MIX

(Skatchlabs.com)
Fuel your muscles with this powerful mixture of carbs, electrolytes and stimulating matcha.



ZEST TEA EARL GREY

(Zesttea.com)
Infused with extra caffeine, a cup of this brew will charge up your workouts.



TRUDEAU'S TEA-MENDOUS TEA TUMBLER

(Shopt Trudeau.com)
The stainless steel mesh basket placed inside a tall tumbler lets you brew and go.

