



Healthy You

Brimming With Benefits

Iced tea is more than a cool remedy for a hot day

By KELSEY OGLETREE

THREE FAST reasons to brew iced tea, rather than buy bottled: It's cheaper, you'll likely add less sugar, and it's healthier—bottled teas contain far fewer polyphenols than fresh-brewed tea, studies show. And you want polyphenols. These antioxidants protect the body's tissues against free radicals—unstable molecules that can increase the risk of illnesses such as coronary heart disease and cancer. Then there's reason number four: You can choose the exact tea you want. We asked registered dietitian-nutritionist Janette Marsac to weigh in on the most common varieties.

Food stylist: Frances Boswell; prop stylist: Carla Gonzalez-Hart; illustration by Matt Lehman

Black tea contains the most caffeine of any steeped tea—47 milligrams (mg) in 1 cup, about half the amount in coffee—and it's a rich source of theaflavins, which may help lower blood cholesterol.

Oolong is a traditional Chinese tea with a flavor that can range from light and fruity to bold and earthy. It has 38 mg of caffeine per cup, and its antioxidants are similar to those in black and green tea.

Green tea retains more disease-fighting compounds than black tea does,

because of its air-drying process, which results in less oxidation. Green tea may also boost metabolism and improve insulin sensitivity. It contains 29 mg of caffeine per cup.

Matcha tea is made from whole green-tea leaves ground into a fine powder, then mixed with hot water. It has about three times more antioxidants than green tea does and has more caffeine, about 70 mg for 1 cup of tea made with 1 teaspoon powder.

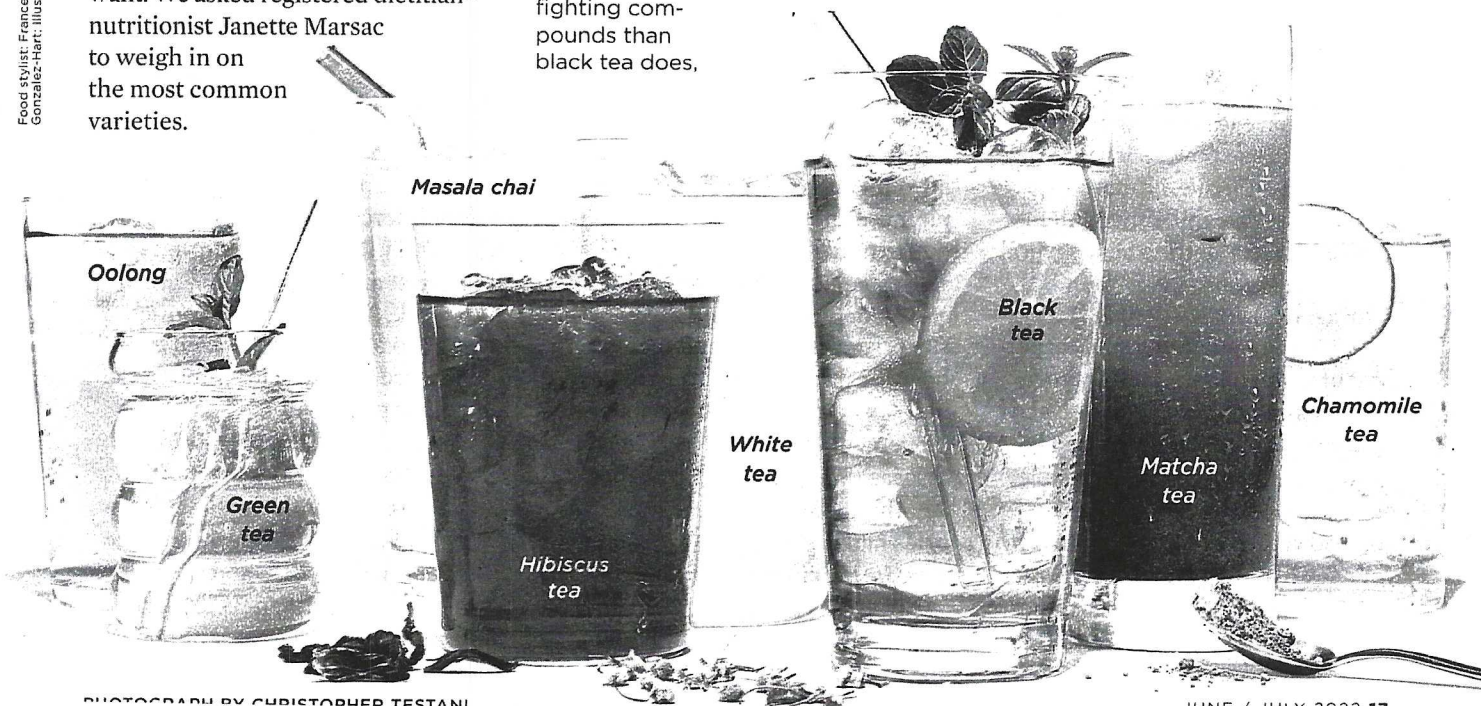
Masala chai is black tea infused with spices, from cardamom to nutmeg to cinnamon. These spices enhance the tea's antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties.

White tea is harvested as buds, rather than leaves, and retains a high level of antioxidants. It generally has a lighter taste and less caffeine than black or green tea. White tea also has oral-health benefits, including plaque prevention (plus, it won't stain your teeth).

Chamomile tea is a caffeine-free herbal tea with a slightly earthy, sweet taste. It contains apigenin, an antioxidant that may induce sleepiness and reduce insomnia, especially in older adults.

Hibiscus tea is fruity and slightly sour, and this caffeine-free tea contains high levels of antioxidants. Sip with caution: Too much hibiscus can have a laxative effect.

Kelsey Ogletree writes on food for Bon Appétit and Shape.



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