

Sippa Cuppa

Rooibos Tea

(Roy-boss)

This marvelous tonic with a funny name relieves a myriad of symptoms (including mild depression)

By Betty Kamen, Ph.D.

The very name of this tea suggests that it came from a far-away time and place. Actually it did. Grown high in the mountains of South Africa, it beckons us back to a world without polluted air or soils. Like other plants growing this way, rooibos (pronounced “roy-boss”) is extravagantly rich in naturally occurring nutrients. At a particular point in the plant’s ripening process, the leaves develop a reddish brown color, explaining why this increasingly popular beverage is also referred to as redbush tea.

New to Americans, the health-giving properties of rooibos tea have been scientifically documented in Japan and South Africa. Studies show that the tea relieves insomnia, nervous tension, mild depression, stomach cramps (including colic), constipation and allergic symptoms (even those caused by hay fever and asthma). It can also ease itching and skin irritations, thereby also offering eczema and acne victims welcome deliverance from misery.

Here are some other benefits:

- Minerals in rooibos tea include iron, potassium, calcium, copper, zinc, magnesium, fluoride, manganese and sodium. (Note: when fluoride is found in a natural context, it can be beneficial.)
- The anti-spasmodic properties of rooibos relieve digestive distress in adults and colic in infants.
- As a true adaptogen (helping the body adapt to stress), rooibos tea will refresh you during the day and

relax you at bedtime.

- Rooibos contains alpha-hydroxy acid, known to promote healthy skin.
- Potent antimutagenic components in rooibos have been conjectured to be responsible for inhibiting chromosomal breakdown.

What’s in rooibos tea that makes it so special?

First, let’s talk about what’s not in it.

NO CAFFEINE. Rooibos tea, unlike other uplifting or “entertainment” beverages, has no caffeine. According to new studies done at Duke University, the caffeine in your morning coffee is confirmed to put you in a state of sustained stress, affecting both blood pressure and heart rate all through the day.

Women who are heavy caffeine drinkers are twice as likely as caffeine abstainers to have short menstrual cycles. So instead of having a period every 28 days, the time between cycles may be reduced to 24 days or less. And maternal coffee consumption is related to preterm delivery and low birthweight.

LOW TANNIN. Iron in the body is reduced by about one-third in tea drinkers. The culprit? Tannin. Tannins (commonly referred to as tannic acid) are the active ingredient in black tea. They can also decrease food intake, growth rate, food absorption and protein digestibility. Foods rich in tannins are considered to be of low nutritional value. A study

Sippa Cuppa Rooibos Tea

was carried out to determine if rooibos tea has a deleterious effect on iron absorption similar to that of ordinary tea. Result: rooibos tea had no significant effect on iron absorption. The limited tannin in this tea also translates to a sweet taste, unlike conventional teas that are bitter mainly because of tannin content.

Now here's the good stuff:

ANTIOXIDANTS. As our environment has grown more toxic, we have a greatly reduced access to natural antioxidants (vitamin E, vitamin C, bioflavonoids, carotene and a host of other less well-known chemicals). So it's not only oxidative damage but also antioxidant deficiency that impacts a wide range of human diseases—from cancer to viral infections to circulatory disease. Both damage and deficiency

Rooibos may prevent age-related oxidative damage in the brain.

are primary reasons why our bodies run out of new cells to replace the older ones that eventually fail, in spite of our built-in safeguards.

Several studies show that rooibos tea contains highly defensive natural antioxidants. Equally exciting, rooibos tea has been validated to be anti-aging, particularly for preventing age-related byproducts of oxidation in the brain.

The tea was able to inhibit the cancer-causing effect of x-rays in test animals. Carcinogenic transformation of cells was reduced with increased concentration of rooibos extract. (Green tea, by the way, does not have this toxic-transformation-suppressing capacity.)

FLAVONOIDS. Rooibos tea is rich in this powerful family of antioxidants. Its major flavonoid is aspalathin—found only in rooibos. Herbs with flavonoids have traditionally been used to treat leg cramps and various skin and circulatory disorders. Flavonoids may also have anti-inflammatory and anti-allergic properties, explaining the benefit claimed for rooibos skin lotions and cosmetics.

SUPEROXIDE DISMUTASE (SOD). SOD is an enzyme that protects against oxidative damage, functioning as a

prime scavenger of free radicals. It can keep fats from changing into harmful lipid peroxide, has anti-inflammatory actions and is easily digested.

OLIGOSACCHARIDES. Rooibos tea secretes a family of unusual oligosaccharides. These are compounds made up of small numbers of simple sugars. The most dramatic news about rooibos tea is that studies from Japan demonstrate safe anti-HIV activity from the oligosaccharides contained in it. Oligosaccharides are involved in the mechanism for viral binding of T-cells, the immune soldiers that keep dangerous attackers at bay.

Contact:

To subscribe to Betty Kamen's free Underground Nutrition Newsletter or free on-line One-line Daily Nutrition Hint, send your e-mail address to betty@well.com.



African Red Tea® Imports Suppliers of the Finest Organic Rooibos & Honeybush Teas

Rooibos Natural Organic Honeybush
Rooibos w/ Honeybush Rooibos Chai w/ Star Anise
Rooibos w/ Madagascar Vanilla Beans Rooibos w/ Black Cunnin Seed

Available in Tea Bags and Loose Leaf

503 N. Fairfax Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90036
toll free: 877.564.0770 direct: 323.658.7832
www.africanredtea.com rooibos@africanredtea.com

Reprinted with permission from Alternative Medicine Magazine, Issue 38
800-333-HEAL www.alternativemedicine.com