

## Tree of Life

Celebrate the olive. Not only is it rich in culinary virtues, but the health and beauty benefits of the fruit inspire inner and outer consumption in equal doses. Sonoma, California, one of the country's prime growing regions, recently celebrated the fruit with its first annual olive festival, and local spas seized the opportunity to use the oil with healthful abandon.

Local entrepreneurs Alison and Mike O'Donnell combined their Remezzano olive oil with sea salt in a moisturizing exfoliant called Body Shine. The spas at MacArthur Place, the Lodge at Sonoma, and Sonoma Mission Inn now all feature the product in their respective scrub and pedicure treatments. At other hotels in the region, order an in-room Olive-You massage by Sierra van der Kamp, who brings along her emollient olive oil infused with lavender.

On the inside, the long history of olive oil in the Mediterranean diet has been linked to a low incidence of cardiovascular disease among its population. This is likely attributable to the presence of oleic acid, a mono-unsaturated fat that reduces cholesterol levels, and of the antioxidants vitamin E, beta-carotene, and polyphenol.

Even the olive leaf has valuable health benefits due to the presence of a powerful antiviral, oleuropein. Olive leaf extract is

an effective pick-me-up when reserves are low and is great for warding off cold and flu viruses. No wonder the Greeks revered the olive tree as a gift from the gods.

*Tamara L. Collins*



## Rooibos is Red



Rooibos may soon be as ubiquitous as green tea. The sweet red herbal brew, made from the wispy leaves of a South African shrub variously known as rooibos, red bush, or Masai, is caffeine-free and high in antioxidants, vitamin C, and minerals. It also

brims with an anti-

spasmodic that helps soothe the stomach. Used externally, it relieves sunburn and skin irritations like eczema, rash, and acne, and cosmetic companies are beginning to tout its anti-aging properties. The Dallas-based Spa Pangea recently augmented its menu with the South African Rooibos Tea Ritual—an indulgent service of bath, wrap, and massage all infused with the soothing elements of rooibos.

Steeping the loose tea for 10 to 20 minutes releases the maximum amount of nutrients, but you can follow in the footsteps of Japanese green tea rituals and use the powdered form, which takes less time and guarantees nothing is wasted. Mix the powder into a facial scrub or mask for a soothing, antioxidant-infused home treatment. *T. L. C.*

