

# NUTRITION NEWS

## The Health Benefits of Tea

This soothing beverage is packed with protective antioxidants.

Tea is the second most popular drink in the world (water is the top choice). Although most people think of tea as a soothing and delicious beverage, it possesses a remarkable wealth of antioxidants. All teas, whether black, green, oolong or white, are harvested from the leaves of a variety of plant known as the *camellia sinensis*. The primary distinction between the different teas is the amount of fermentation they undergo. Black teas are the most fermented, white teas the least. Herbal teas are not technically teas since they do not include *camellia sinensis* leaves.

All true teas contain polyphenols, powerful antioxidants believed to protect against heart disease, certain cancers and stroke.

The various levels of fermentation affect teas in different ways. Recent studies have shown drinking green tea might boost metabolism, oolong teas can lower blood sugar and black teas can promote oral health.

Tea contains half the caffeine of coffee.

Tea is also not just for drinking: it has been used for centuries in marinades and as a flavoring agent in many distinctive cuisines.

Health, Nutrition and the Environment\*