

DESCRIPTION OF THE YERBA MATÉ

Yerba Maté is a widely popular tea-like beverage consumed mainly in Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and southern Brazil. It is brewed from the dried leaves and stemlets of the perennial tree *Ilex Paraguayensis* ("yerba maté"). The name "maté" derives from the quichua word "matí" that names the gourd (*Lagenaria vulgaris*) that is traditionally used to drink the infusion.

Since the pre-colombian times, natives have consumed Yerba Maté in a variety of forms even though it was not until the time of the Jesuits that it was thoroughly cultivated.

The scientific name "*Ilex Paraguayensis*" was given by the French naturalist and botanist Auguste de Saint Hilaire in 1822.

In the wild, the plant needs about 25 years to develop completely, reaching in that case a height of up to 15 meters. The leaves are alternated, cuneiform, and elliptical or oval, with the border slightly serrated. It flowers between the months of October and December. The flowers are small, polygamous, dioicous, with calix and corolla in a tetrameric disposition. The fruit resembles a pepper berry. Among several varieties, there are three that are the most important: "angustifolia", "longifolia" and "latifolia".

Maté has a characteristic mature flavor which is somewhat sweet, sour, withered leaf like, and cigarette-like, similar to that obtained from tea (*Camellia Sinensis*). Of the 196 volatile chemical compounds found in yerba Maté, 144 are also found in tea. The infusions of "*Ilex Paraguayensis*" are less astringent than those made of tea.

It is used in popular medicine and employed in commercial herbal preparations as a stimulant to the central nervous system, a diuretic, and an antirheumatic.

THE HOT "MATÉ" INFUSION

"Maté" is popular in anyplace where there is Yerba Maté. To prepare the maté infusion, called "Maté" itself, the dried minced leaves of the Yerba Maté are placed inside a gourd called "Maté" too. Usually the hard shell from a local fruit, but it can also be any suitable metal, glass or wood recipient and hot water (approx. at 70° C) is added. This is called "cebar el maté". The infusion is sucked through a metal pipe called "bombilla", which has a strainer at its lower end to prevent the minced leaves from reaching the mouth. There are as many different techniques to prepare Maté as Maté drinkers.

Some people add sugar and/or some herbs (like mint, for example). Some replace the water with milk, especially for the children. The Maté is replenished with hot water many times till the liquid comes out with almost no taste. A typical Maté can contain about 50 g of yerba maté. Since the caffeine content of yerba maté is about 1-1.5% in weight you can expect about 500-750 mg of caffeine in a maté.

THE COLD MATÉ INFUSION OR “TERERÉ”

The cold infusion called “Tereré” is widely popular in the hotter areas such as Paraguay, the Brazilian state of Mato Grosso do Sul, and the Northeastern provinces of Argentina. The minced leaves of Yerba Maté are put into a recipient called “Guampa” usually consisting of an encarved and decorated cow horn. Basically, the “Tereré” is prepared exactly as the hot Maté, only using cold iced water. It is common use to add herbs such as mint or camomille to the water before pouring it into the Guampa.

THE “MATÉ COCIDO” OR “COCIDO”

True “Cocido” is rarely seen these days because of its complex way of preparation. Originally the minced leaves of Yerba Maté were threw into a pot along with a fairly amount of sugar and then a piece of burning charcoal was added to roast the leaves and then stirred thoroughly. Before the mix started to burn, hot water was added to the mix and then stained off. The result is a thick cupped, dark green beverage with a strong and characteristic flavor. These days however, it is difficult to have within easy reach a piece of burning charcoal, so this flavor has become something that most people only remember and long for.

OUR INSTANT YERBA MATÉ

Our Instant Yerba Maté is 100% soluble solids of pure yerba maté on form Spray Dried powder. It is a 100 % natural product with no additives, no sugar, no preservatives or artificial colors or aromas. Only one tea spoon is enough to prepare up of 200 cl (7 oz). As it contains no sugar it can be sweetened according to preference either with sugar itself or other natural or artificial sweeteners.

Our Instant Yerba Maté can be prepared with either hot water or milk. And it offers to the consumers the flavor and aroma that they kindly remember from their childhood or their visits through the farm houses or ranches where the more traditional forms of preparing the Yerba Maté could still be found.

Our instant Yerba Maté maintains all the qualities of natural Yerba Maté with the additional facility of easy and quick preparation.