

De-Stress and Stay Alert with Tea!

lifestyles/
Food

By Danielle Beaudette

Chinese Tea Ceremony, China © Photo by Danielle Beaudette, The Cozy Tea Cart

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All tea, whether white, green, oolong, or black, comes from the same plant, *Camellia sinensis*. For

this reason, scientists recommend drinking any type of loose tea to get the maximum health benefits. Five cups per day is recommended, so give yourself some variety and choose a tea from each category!

For thousands of years, monks have been drinking tea to maintain alertness during meditation. In the past few years, scientists have learned that there are two elements in tea that are responsible for this alertness – caffeine and L-theanine. Caffeine aids in stimulating the mind and the L-theanine promotes a mindful state of relaxation.

This powerful combination of elements is almost exclusively found in the tea plant and allows a person to multi-task better, improve the ability to concentrate for longer hours, increase the speed of perception, and decrease anxiety. Several studies have shown that drinking five cups of tea a day will help a person to recover from stress more quickly. In a paper by Eschenauer and Sweet, it was concluded that “increased alpha activity in the brain induced by L-theanine has been associated with increased creativity, increased performance under stress, and improved learning and concentration as well as decreased



anxiety.” (Eschenauer G, Sweet BV. Pharmacology and Therapeutic Uses of Theanine. *AM J Health-Sys Ph* 2006; 63-26-30.)

L-theanine has also been shown to support the immune system. New studies are finding that tea boosts the body’s defenses against infection. According to the proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, www.pnas.org, an experiment showed that immune system blood cells from tea drinkers responded five times faster to germs than did the blood cells of coffee drinkers. “We worked out the molecular aspects of this tea component in the test tube and then tested it on a small number of people to see if it actually worked in human beings,” said Dr. Jack F. Bukowski, a researcher at Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston and Harvard Medical School.

The results, he said, gave clear proof that five cups of tea a day sharpened the body’s disease defenses. Continued studies are being done to further understand the effect of L-theanine in tea.

There are many other health benefits of tea including a link to lowering heart disease and cancer risk due to its high amount of antioxidants, specifically, EGCG. Both caffeine and L-theanine are found in all types of tea, so it’s best to experiment with the different teas to see which produces the best effects for you. We recommend starting with white tea, and then moving into the green, oolong and black tea categories.



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For more information read her bio on page 16 or call 603-249-9111 or visit www.TheCozyTeaCart.com.