

Okinawa **FLAT BELLY** **TONIC DRINKS**

CRP Lowering Smoothies



Mike Banner

CRP Lowering Tonics



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**OKINAWA FLAT BELLY
DRINKS THAT LOWER C-REACTIVE PROTEIN**



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AN INTRODUCTION

...ABOUT **CRP** & INFLAMMATION

CRP – otherwise known as C-Reactive Protein – is a protein found in your blood.

So, what is C-Reactive Protein?

It's a protein in your body causing inflammation and helping to manage the whole ordeal.

Inflammation happens when your immune system – or your body's super power – fights a possible threat. For example, you had a cold this winter...your immune system saw red and fought it off by making your sinuses swell. Thus, this means your body was fighting off the cold, to get rid off it.

However, sometimes inflammation can be bad.

For instance, with auto-immune diseases like rheumatoid arthritis (RA), multiple sclerosis or Crohn's disease (an inflammatory bowel disease), the immune system doesn't know what to attack. The immune system mistakes parts of your body and because of this, it attacks perfectly healthy cells.

And to do so, it uses proteins which are called autoantibodies. Now, the body is flooded with inflammation and way too many autoantibodies like tumour necrosis factor, also known as CRP or CRP and CRP.

And here's how the circle comes back to CRP.

CRP is the general that signals the army, your white blood cells – who are behind the process of inflammation – where to go and what to do.

When the body has high levels of CRP, it can mean two things. You may have a severe bacterial infection – like pneumonia – and consequently, high CRP levels are a sign that inflammation is fighting off the disease.

In this case, high levels of CRP can also trigger very unpleasant symptoms such as fever, muscle aches, loss of appetite, redness, swelling and low blood pressure. Things that can be dealt with as long as you are healing.

On the other hand, if CRP levels are high but there's no infection, there's probably an underlying issue to deal with. Additionally, the symptoms usually differ from an infection.

For example, the symptoms can cause the redness and swelling seen in RA or aggravate the red skin plaques that come with psoriasis (an auto-immune skin disease).

Moreover, CRP has been linked to insulin resistance – the preface of type 2 diabetes. Thus, high levels of CRP can affect your body's response to insulin, the hormone that helps cells to turn glucose (blood sugar) into energy. Also, being overweight or obese will cause an increase of CRP and that can also lead to insulin resistance.

Therefore, it is primordial to have correct levels of CRP if you aren't fighting an infectious disease.

In the worst cases, drugs can block the excess of CRP but like any drugs, they come with their own lot of side effects. So, if you can help it, start the natural way.

Because at the end of the day, you can!

In this e-book, the proposed drinks contain foods and ingredients that can fight off inflammation and high CRP levels. Thus, they will help you reduce the symptoms naturally and if you add regular physical activity to it & improve your current diet, you will greatly improve the quality of your life!

Note: It's crucial to avoid certain foods to improve your odds of getting better. For instance, you shouldn't consume hydrogenated fats like margarine or sunflower oil, fried foods, processed meat, refined carbs such as white bread, pasta and white rice, soda, sugary drinks, sweets and everything that generally screams...unhealthy!

These drinks can help you lose unwanted body fat! The most powerful are drinks 1 and 5. The others

Okinawa Flat Belly Tonic Drinks – The Flat Belly Drinks

can be used to provide variety and are almost as effective.

The slimming teas included can be taken together with the drinks 1-5 on the same day. These can be especially useful to cut cravings, boost energy and calm nerves.

Best of luck and keep yourself accountable, it is worth it!

Now, let's have a look at some delicious and badass drinks to fight off CRP.

“Red Passion” Smoothie

An unusual smoothie to reduce high CRP levels

Ingredients (for one smoothie):

- ½ cup | freshly squeezed orange juice (keep the zest)
- 1 cup | fresh or frozen berries (the more colour the better!)
- ½ cup | red cabbage
- ½ teaspoon | cinnamon
- 2 teaspoons | raw almond butter
- Optional: 1 teaspoon | raw honey (unpasteurized) or for a lower carb option: add 1 teaspoon of erythritol or xylitol* (both are alcohol sugars that aren't entirely absorbed by our bodies and are safe to use)
- Optional: 3 or 4 ice cubes for extra freshness

* Xylitol can have laxative effects, use it sparingly.

Directions:

Gather all the ingredients and chop the cabbage. Put the orange juice (with the zest), the berries, the red cabbage, the cinnamon and the raw almond butter into a processor. Mix it thoroughly.

Add ice and add a little honey or sweetener, according to taste.

For best results, drink it straight away to enjoy the full benefits of the nutrients. If you have a relative suffering from diabetes, yourself or are at risk, avoid adding honey and prefer erythritol or stevia to maintain healthy blood sugar levels.

Discover the Amazing Benefits of...

Berries & Anthocyanins

Berries are packed full with antioxidants, essential compounds that help regulate free radicals.

Free radicals are a byproduct of a normally functioning metabolism but they also are unstable molecules. Thus, it's important to have a low quantity of free radicals to help your body fight against bacteria and viruses. [\(1\)](#)

Nonetheless, way too many free radicals can and will harm your cells. That's where antioxidants can help.

In berries, you will find a wide array of these and one type of antioxidant that I shall put in the spotlight are anthocyanins.

Found in numerous plants, fruits and vegetables, anthocyanins are water soluble pigments that can appear – depending on their PH – red, blue, purple or black.

As many other antioxidants, anthocyanins are believed to be very useful in reducing oxidative stress. [\(2\)](#)

However, unlike other better known antioxidants, research still needs to be done on anthocyanins.

For instance, a study showed that a single portion of blueberries can improve cell antioxidant defence against DNA damage. [\(3\)](#)

Clearly, we haven't finished hearing wonderful facts about the prowesses of antioxidants and also, anthocyanins.

One thing can be said as of now, berries are good for your body, they can potentially improve blood sugar levels and insulin resistance, and they can fight inflammation and high CRP levels.

For instance, berries have powerful anti-inflammatory properties. Several studies have shown that

the antioxidants (which includes anthocyanins) found in berries may be useful to lower inflammatory markers. (4)

The simple fact of adding berries into your diet can lower your risk of heart disease and reduce inflammation.

Red Cabbage

Not unlike berries, red cabbage is loaded with antioxidants. One of them is one of the most known ones: Vitamin C, a major antioxidant that helps and boosts our immune system.

Vitamin C – also known as ascorbic acid – stimulates the activity of white blood cells, the first line of defence for our immune system.

Moreover, red cabbage also contains anthocyanins and another very interesting compound, known as sulforaphane (also found in broccoli), which possesses really strong anti-inflammatory properties. (5)

Overall, red cabbage has great anti-inflammatory and anti-arthritis properties, and is also a must to fight against osteoporosis and chronic diseases, the latter may have to do with anthocyanins...!

“Antioxidant Blast” Smoothie

A drink full of antioxidant goodness to keep inflammation at bay

Ingredients (for one smoothie):

- ½ cup | pomegranate juice
- 1 cup | fresh or frozen berries
- 1 small container | full fat Greek yogurt without sugar

Directions:

Place all ingredients in a blender or a food processor. Blend until smooth and enjoy while it's fresh!

That's it!

You can add a bit of sweetener (such as erythritol, xylitol or stevia) but the sugar in the pomegranate juice and berries should be more than enough.

Drink this smoothie on a busy day for a boost of energy (once or two times, if taken as a meal replacement). For extra freshness, don't hesitate to add some ice!

Discover the Powerful Benefits of...

Pomegranate

The many little gems found in a pomegranate have this gorgeous red/purple-ish colour thanks to its content in anthocyanins. This delicious fruit is a good source of fibre and provides vitamins A, C and E, iron and another type of antioxidants, known as tannins (yes, the same ones as tea :)).

A study found that pomegranate could be effective to improve inflammatory and oxidative stress status – meaning, it can potentially lower inflammation levels. [\(6\)](#)

Moreover, a far more extensive study, done over 3 years, found that pomegranate juice consumption really improved the cardiovascular health of the participants. The results showed a clear improvement of damaged arteries, a decrease of cholesterol build-up in arteries and overall, a diminution of blood pressure. (7)

So, pomegranates and pomegranate juice are much more than a mouth watering or a salad sprinkling joy. This fruit boasts a powerhouse of antioxidants and should be a part of your pantry when in season (fresh) and not, as a juice.

However, due to high levels of sugar, do not drink or eat pomegranate every day. Let's continue keeping diabetes at bay!

Greek Yogurt

This fairly new staple of the modern fridge has far more goodies to offer than the “common” yogurt.

First and foremost, it's far less sweet than its counterpart – usually up to four times less sweet than a regular yogurt.

After the usual process of yogurt making, another step is added to create a rich, creamy yogurt that also has a better bioavailability (nutrients can be absorbed more easily by the body).

A single serving of plain Greek yogurt provides 12 to 18 grams of protein. Also, if you happen to be sensitive to lactose, you may find this yogurt far easier to digest, due to its lower lactose content.

So, this is a great source of protein, minus sea pollutants or antibiotics (seafood or meat), as long as you go for an organic brand.

Having a “correct” daily protein intake is crucial for the health of your immune system and consequently, to reduce inflammation in your body.

What do I mean by correct?

On average, an adult will need 0.8 gram of protein per kilogram of weight (a day). After 65 years, the

amount increases between 1 to 1.2 grams per kilogram. So, you probably don't need to eat protein thrice a day!

However, there's an underdog that also packs a punch in Greek yogurt... probiotics.

Probiotics are healthy bacteria that can colonize the intestinal flora, also known as microbiota. They play a crucial role in boosting the immune system and reducing digestive issues.

Recent studies have found that the health of the intestinal flora may play an even bigger role in our well-being – by balancing our mental and physical health! ([8](#))

“Purple Intense” Smoothie

A smoothie packed with anthocyanins!

Ingredients (for one smoothie):

- 1 cup | fresh or frozen black raspberries
- 1 big handful | purple kale (purple curly or leaf cabbage)
- 1 banana
- optional: 3 to 5 ice cubes

Directions:

Place all ingredients in a blender or a food processor. Blend until smooth and enjoy while it's fresh!

This drink is quite heavy on the carbs, you can halve the quantity of banana, if needed.

Avoid drinking this smoothie in the evening and make sure to drink it, if you are having a physically intense day.

[Discover the Strong Anti-inflammatory Benefits of...](#)

Black Raspberries

Black raspberries could be the “winning” antioxidant berry, if such contest ever existed!

Indeed, black raspberries could have the higher amount of antioxidants in the whole berry kingdom. Making this little black berry a must to fight off inflammation and high CRP levels!

Studies have already shed light on the anti-cancer properties of both red and black raspberries.

In 2006, a study published on the Journal of Agriculture and Food Chemistry showed that black and red raspberries inhibited the growth of oral, breast, colon and prostate tumour cells. [\(9\)](#)

Moreover, black raspberries have very strong pro-apoptotic effects – which means they have compounds that promote apoptosis, a natural body process to get rid of unwanted or abnormal cells.

The compound that seems to be behind those powerful properties may be ellagic acid, a phenolic acid that has (proven) anti-mutagenic and anti-carcinogenic properties.

But let's go back on anthocyanins and anthocyanins rich foods!

A study from 2012 tested raspberry extract in rats with experimentally induced arthritis. The group that was tested (compared to the control one) showed significantly less symptoms of arthritis after a 30 day period. [\(10\)](#)

Other studies have also shown that for other conditions linked to inflammation, raspberries may prove very useful indeed. The science on this little berry and its many friends is extremely promising to say the least!

Purple Kale & Kale, in General

In the world of healthy foods, Kale is undoubtedly a top contender!

It is one of the most nutritious plants in existence...and to boost, one of the healthiest.

This plant, from the cabbage family, can be either green or purple, and have a curly or smooth shape. You will find more commonly green kale – aka curly kale or Scots kale – while this type is extremely healthy, if you find purple kale, go for it!

Because purple kale contains very high quantities of antioxidants, among them, a high amount of anthocyanins, beta-carotene, vitamin C, several flavonoids and polyphenols.

Among them, two flavonoids, quercetin and kaempferol, have powerful heart protective properties, anti-inflammatory, anti-viral, anti-depressant and anti-carcinogenic properties, just to name a few!

[\(11,12\)](#)

Finally, let's have a look at the nutritional punch that is found in a single cup of common raw kale!

In one cup of kale (about 67 grams), you will find:

- 206% of the reference daily intake (RDI) of Vitamin A
- 684% of the RDI of Vitamin K
- 134% of the RDI of Vitamin C
- 9% of the RDI of Vitamin B6
- 26% of the RDI of Manganese
- 9% of the RDI of Calcium
- 10% of the RDI of Copper
- 9% of the RDI of Potassium
- 6% of the RDI of Magnesium

“Wake Up” Smoothie

A must to wake up the body with energy-rich foods

Ingredients (for one smoothie):

- ¾ cup | fresh or frozen wild blueberries
- 3/8 cup or 85 grams | silk tofu (smooth tofu)
- ½ banana
- 6 tablespoons | unsweetened almond milk (or other milk of your choice)
- 1 tablespoon | ground chia seeds
- optional: 1 tablespoon | raw honey or sweetener of choice (erythritol, xylitol or stevia)

Directions:

Mix all ingredients thoroughly in a blender or food processor. Blend thoroughly and eat quickly. This smoothie is ideal for breakfast, you can add ¼ to ½ cup of oats, if you need extra healthy carbs.

This drink should be consumed on an active day and can be taken as a meal replacement.

[Discover the Powerful Benefits of...](#)

Blueberries

Blueberries are native to North America and some varieties were introduced into Europe during the 1930s.

These little morsels of joy are so much more than a tasty and healthy snack.

Blueberries are low on calories (85% water content) and incredibly dense with nutrients.

A single cup of blueberries has 4 grams of fibre, 24% of the reference daily intake (RDI) in Vitamin C, 36% of the RDI in Vitamin K and 25% of the RDI in Manganese (and smaller amounts of other nutrients).

In the world of antioxidants, blueberries are also a top contender. This fruit is rich in anthocyanins and flavonoids.

For instance, anthocyanins are thought to have anti-diabetic properties.

Research suggests that anthocyanins (found in blueberries among many other fruits and veggies) have beneficial effects on glucose metabolism and insulin sensitivity. ([13](#))

Moreover, it has been suggested or clearly proven that blueberries can reduce DNA damage, reduce the risk of cancer, reduce “bad” LDL cholesterol, lower blood pressure and potentially prevent heart disease.

Also, not unlike other berries, blueberries improve and maintain brain function and eye sight!

Chia Seeds

Outside of the world of healthy eating, chia seeds don't really look that appealing and frankly, it's understandable. Their look seems more adequate in the beach, mixed up with sand.

However, we shouldn't underestimate the humble looking chia seeds, there's far more than looks in this case!

Firstly, chia seeds are packed with nutrients while delivering a tiny amount of calories. Interestingly, the Mayans, who knew very well these little seeds called them “chia” which means....strength.

One ounce (or 28 grams) of chia seeds provide 11 grams of Fibre (!), 4 grams of Protein, 9 grams of Fat (5 of which are omega-3 essential fatty acids), 18% of Calcium's RDI, 30% of Manganese's RDI,

30% of Magnesium's RDI and 27% of Phosphorus RDI.

They do pack a punch, don't they?!

Additionally, chia seeds are loaded with antioxidants. And when it comes to that, a small study highlights the properties of chia seeds very well.

A 3 month study, done on 20 people showed that a daily intake of 37 grams of chia seeds lowered a major inflammatory marker by 40%! [\(14\)](#)

Finally, chia seeds are good for many other things: they are extremely rich in proteins, have a good balance of amino acids, can help with weight-loss, may lower the risk of heart disease, improve bone health, may lower blood sugar levels and of course, are extremely useful to fight chronic inflammation!

“Anthocyanins bomb” Smoothie

A smoothie that packs a nutritious & antioxidant punch!

Ingredients (for one smoothie):

- 4 | fresh or frozen strawberries
- ½ cup | fresh or frozen blueberries
- ½ cup | fresh or frozen red and/or black raspberries
- 2 tablespoons | chia seeds
- 1 cup | almond milk
- Optional: 1 teaspoon | raw honey (unpasteurized) or for a lower carb option: add 1 teaspoon of erythritol or xylitol* (both are alcohol sugars that aren't entirely absorbed by our bodies and are safe to use)
- Optional: 3 or 4 ice cubes for extra freshness

* Xylitol can have laxative effects, use it sparingly.

Directions:

Place all ingredients in a blender or a food processor. Blend until smooth and enjoy quickly!

Do not add honey if you are watching calories, the sugar content (fructose) of the berries should be satisfying enough. ;)

Avoid drinking this smoothie in the evening.

Discover the Tasty Benefits of..

Strawberries

The common strawberry, as we know it, is a hybrid from two wild species found in North America and Chile. Strawberries are a brilliant source of vitamin C and manganese, while also providing a good amount of potassium and folate.

These juicy red morsels of happiness contain a whopping 91% of water, about 7.7% of carbohydrates and, a little fat and protein.

Furthermore, strawberries are loaded with antioxidants and compounds that are beneficial for heart health and to balance blood sugar levels.

They also contain another antioxidant compound that was mentioned above... ellagic acid. An antioxidant polyphenol that has protective effects against chronic disease and may even be able to inhibit cancer growth. (15)

Also, studies have found that strawberries (and other berries) can potentially reduce “bad” LDL cholesterol and boost “good” HDL cholesterol levels, and....lower blood pressure. (16)

Bottom line, strawberries are tasty, low cal, healthy, nutritious and lower inflammation, cholesterol, blood pressure, blood sugar levels AND the risk of cancer.

And... don't they look pretty?

Hibiscus Green Tea

A powerful antioxidant combination

Ingredients (for 1L):

- 1 tablespoon | organic dried hibiscus flowers
- 1 teaspoon | organic (preferably) green tea
- Optional: 1 teaspoon (per cup) | raw honey (unpasteurized) or for a lower carb option: add 1 teaspoon of erythritol or xylitol* (both are alcohol sugars that aren't entirely absorbed by our bodies and are safe to use)

* Xylitol can have laxative effects, use it sparingly.

Directions:

Gather all the ingredients and boil 1 litre of water. Let it settle for 5 minutes before adding the hibiscus and the green tea. Let it steep for (at least) 5 minutes.

Add a little honey or sweetener, if needed.

This tea is ideal during the day but it's preferable to avoid drinking it in the evenings and at night.

Discover the Rich Benefits of...

Hibiscus

Hibiscus tea comes from the flower of the plant *Hibiscus Sabdariffa*. It creates a deep ruby red colour and has a deep tart taste.

Hibiscus is loaded with antioxidants – with of course, many anthocyanins that give it its vibrant colour and another one, a flavonoid (mentioned earlier) called quercetin.

The high concentration of antioxidants in hibiscus (and other plants) may lower the risk of cancer and may also be useful in its treatment. The research on the matter is highly exciting and of course, very promising! [\(17\)](#)

Let's go back to quercetin though...

This little flavonoid has a wide range of actions, such as anti-carcinogenic, anti-inflammatory and anti-viral properties.

As far as it's anti-inflammatory properties go, it has been showed that quercetin has long lasting anti-inflammatory capacities. Additionally, it plays a role in modulating action on inflammation and immunity. [\(18\)](#)

And this is just distilled information, there's a world of Science on quercetin and other interesting flavonoids. However, for the purpose of this e-book, just remember...

...hibiscus is your anti-inflammatory friend!

Okay, and your lowering blood pressure, your increasing "good" and decreasing "bad" cholesterol (HDL & LDL respectively) and your weight-loss... friend!

Green Tea

Green tea is one of the most consumed and healthiest drinks on the planet.

It packs a heavy punch of antioxidants and nutrients, that will significantly benefit the body.

In the world of drinks, tea offers a substantial amount of polyphenols, an antioxidant category that can reduce inflammation and prevent/fight cancer.

Green tea contains a whopping 30% of polyphenols by weight and a very significant amount of EGCG, a catechin (natural antioxidant) that prevents cell damage, among other things.

You may have already heard about the fat burning and metabolic boosting properties of green tea. Nevertheless, let's shed some rapid light on another fascinating property of a good green cuppa!

Several studies done by scientists over the world found evidence that the catechin EGCG may have benefits for people with rheumatoid arthritis (RA). [\(19\)](#)

And if it works on RA by lowering inflammation levels, we can only theorize that it could also be effective on other high-inflammation/high CRP levels pathologies and chronic inflammatory diseases.

Zen Berry Tea

Ideal to chill and to boost your immune system, at the same time

Ingredients (for 1L):

- 1 tablespoon | organic rooibos tea
- ½ cup | dried or frozen berries
- Optional: 1 teaspoon (per cup) | raw honey (unpasteurized) or for a lower carb option: add 1 teaspoon of erythritol or xylitol* (both are alcohol sugars that aren't entirely absorbed by our bodies and are safe to use)

* Xylitol can have laxative effects, use it sparingly.

Directions:

Gather all the ingredients and boil 1 litre of water. Let it settle for 5 minutes before adding the rooibos tea and another 5 minutes before adding the berries. Let it steep for (at least) 10 minutes.

Add a little honey or sweetener, if needed.

This tea is ideal in the evening or to quench your thirst during a calm day.

Discover the Relaxing Benefits of...

Rooibos Tea

Rooibos is a herbal tea that comes from the leaves of a shrub called *Aspalathus linearis*, usually

found on the western coast of South Africa.

This tea isn't related to green, black or white tea – rooibos doesn't contain any caffeine. However, it's packed full with antioxidants, which is why it ended up in this e-book!

One of these antioxidants, aspalathin seems to have interesting anti-diabetic properties.

A study in mice found that aspalathin reduced insulin resistance and played a role in balancing blood sugar levels. [\(20\)](#)

If you have low iron levels, rooibos might be a drink of choice, since it doesn't contain much tannins (unlike actual green or black tea) – which interfere with the absorption of some nutrients, such as iron.

It's important to know that rooibos is very safe. Nevertheless, some very rare side effects have been reported when drinking large quantities.

Some compounds of rooibos seem to stimulate oestrogen production (a female sex hormone). So, if you have any hormonal issues, you may want to be careful with it. [\(21\)](#)

Finally, just remember: rooibos tea is a must to boost your immune system when you also...want to chill.

Ginger & Turmeric Tea

An antioxidant tea that spices up your day!

Ingredients (for 1L):

- ½ tablespoon | organic turmeric powder
- 3 - 4 cm | fresh ginger peeled
- 1 lemon or lime
- a little black pepper
- optional: a little raw honey or sweetener & a dash of cayenne pepper for the adventurous!

Directions:

In a saucepan, bring water to a boil, let it rest for 5 minutes and add turmeric and ginger. On a gentle or medium heat, let it simmer for 5 to 10 minutes.

Serve with the juice of the lemon or lime, add a little black pepper (I will explain why shortly) and you can add a sweetener and some cayenne pepper, if you feel like it.

You can drink as many cups of this tea as you'd like. However, avoid drinking it in the evening, unless you are planning vigorous physical activity! ;)

Discover the Powerful Benefits of...

Turmeric

Turmeric is more than a staple spice for curries. It's an absolute unit when it comes to the nutrition

and medicinal properties it packs!

In India, turmeric has been used for thousands of years as a spice and, as a medicinal plant.

Recently, science has been catching up with ancestral knowledge and is figuring out the compounds that do have medicinal properties.

In turmeric, there are active compounds called curcuminoids, one of the most important ones being curcumin.

Curcumin is the main active ingredient of turmeric and possesses very strong anti-inflammatory properties.

However, eaten by itself, the curcumin in turmeric isn't that well absorbed by the bloodstream. To increase the effectiveness of curcumin's bioavailability, there's a solution!

Piperine, a compound found in black pepper changes the game by improving the absorption of curcumin by a whopping 2000%. [\(22\)](#)

Finally, don't hesitate to eat or drink turmeric with a fatty meal, curcumin is fat soluble and will be even better assimilated by the body with fat.

Ginger

Ginger is a root native from South-east Asia, a delicious spice that not only adds up taste, it also does adds some extremely interesting health benefits.

Research is still young when it comes to ginger but some studies have been showing us that ginger has a lot under its belt.

Ginger is a powerful anti-inflammatory thanks to its high antioxidant content – which may help to prevent neurodegenerative diseases, cancer, heart disease and of course, chronic inflammatory disease.

Moreover, this powerful root can balance blood sugar levels. For instance, a study found that ginger improved fasting blood sugar levels in diabetics. ([23](#))

Last but not least, ginger may also help the process of weight loss, combined with a good diet and an active lifestyle.

Cinnamon & Honey Green Tea

A sweet & healthy treat

Ingredients (for 1L):

- 1 tablespoon | organic (preferably) green tea
- 1 or 2 | cinnamon sticks
- 1 lime juice
- 2 to 4 tablespoons | raw honey or sweetener of your choice

Directions:

Boil 1 litre of water, take it out of the fire. Add the green tea and the cinnamon, and let it steep for 5 minutes. Drain the water.

Afterwards, add the lime juice and a little honey or sweetener, if needed.

For best results, drink it in the morning while fasting (before breakfast) or when trying to cut out caffeine!

Discover the Yummy Benefits of...

Cinnamon

This delicious spice that is used for both, sweet and savoury dishes is another must in the kitchen.

However, it's also been used for its medicinal properties for thousands of years and now, research is confirming what has been suspected for aeons!

When it comes to its beneficial properties, cinnamon is loaded with antioxidants. It contains numerous polyphenols, which are a great tool to keep inflammation levels stable.

You will easily find Cassia cinnamon, the most commonly available and used variety of cinnamon. However, if you want to boost the benefits of cinnamon and can afford it, go for Ceylon cinnamon instead.

The anti-inflammatory properties of cinnamon have been demonstrated.

In a study from 2015, both Ceylon and Cassia varieties were tested. Ceylon cinnamon showed the most interesting results to fight chronic inflammation. Nonetheless, Cassia cinnamon also packs a healthy anti-inflammatory punch! (24)

Also, cinnamon has interesting heart protective properties, it can improve insulin sensitivity, lower blood sugar levels, and significantly reduce the risks of type 2 diabetes!

Raw Honey

Raw honey is more than a delicious sweet unpasteurized nectar that packs a world of flavour!

First, to fully enjoy the benefits of honey, it has to be processed as little as possible – to get there easily choose an organic and if possible, locally produced honey.

Honey is a great source of antioxidants and it also has antibacterial and antifungal properties. Some very specific honeys like Manuka honey are brilliant tools to boost tissue regeneration (heal wounds).

Moreover, a very good honey can help you lose weight. Yes, really!

It's a very potent prebiotic, which means that it can nourish the good bacteria that inhabits your intestines.

New research has shown that a healthy intestinal flora (aka gut bacteria) is essential, not only to lose weight but also, to keep the weight off! (25)

Nevertheless, honey still contains fructose – which will end up as glucose in our bodies. And as such, if you are planning on losing weight, eat it in moderation. One or two tablespoons daily tops!

Chaga Chai Tea

An unusual chai tea that will do more than surprise!

Ingredients (for 1L):

- 4 chunks | chaga mushroom
- 1 stick | cinnamon
- 1 inch | freshly peeled ginger
- 4 whole cloves
- 4 cardamom pods
- 1 star anise (optional)
- ½ tablespoon | black or red peppercorns
- A little unsweetened almond milk
- Optional: 1 teaspoon (per cup) | raw honey (unpasteurized) or for a lower carb option: add 1 teaspoon of erythritol or xylitol* (both are alcohol sugars that aren't entirely absorbed by our bodies and are safe to use)

* Xylitol can have laxative effects, use it sparingly.

Directions:

Place the water in a saucepan, add the chaga and the spices. Bring the pot to a gentle simmer for 30 minutes. You can leave it longer for a stronger flavour but do not let it boil.

Once brewed, drain the chaga and spices.

When serving, add a little almond milk and, honey or sweetener, according to taste.

Discover the Earthy Benefits of..

Chaga

This mushroom grows on birch trees in the northern hemisphere. It's a big chunk of "dirt looking" mushroom that is attached to a birch tree. The inside of the mushroom is orange.

Important: Don't go foraging without someone who's knowledgeable on the subject of fungi and mushrooms (mycology). The risks are way too big and some mushrooms... can be fatal.

So, the chaga mushroom – also known scientifically as *Inonotus obliquus* – is extremely packed with nutrients. In a chaga mushroom, you will find most B vitamins, vitamin D, potassium, copper, selenium, zinc, iron, manganese, magnesium, calcium, amino acids and many more nutrients.

The antioxidant content of chaga is high, research lacks on the subject but hopefully, it catches up soon enough!

However, research has shown that chaga could slow down certain cancer cells and the growth of tumours in mice. (26)

Moreover, another study found that triterpenes, compounds found in the chaga mushroom can cause tumour cells to self-destruct. (27)

Fascinating, isn't it?

Although, let's not get too excited too fast. As always, research takes time and new studies on chaga are still happening. Hopefully, this could lead to extensive studies on humans.

Let's go back to inflammation and the immune system...

Research suggests that chaga may be efficient in supporting the immune system by helping cell communication. (28)

Similarly, chaga's role in improving cell communication could also help control inflammation – which is great news to fight auto-immune and chronic inflammatory diseases.

Finally, chaga seems to have beneficial properties on high blood pressure and high blood sugar

levels. And to top it off, its anti-inflammatory and anti-carcinogenic properties could potentially change the evolution of current medical treatments (i.e. treatments for cancer and chronic diseases).

Chaga has a bright future in our lives and hopefully, in medicine too!

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