

Olive Leaves Healthy Alternative for Green Tea



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Introduction

Olive is one of the most important crops in the Mediterranean countries. More than eight million ha of olive trees are cultivated worldwide among which the Mediterranean basin presents around 98% of them. *Olea europaea* L. is widely studied for its alimentary use, the fruits and the oil are important components in the daily diet of a large part of the world's population. Both the cultivation of olive trees and olive oil extraction generate every year substantial quantities of products generally known as "olive byproducts" and having no practical applications [1].

About Olive Leaf

Olive leaves, available throughout the year, are one of the byproducts of olive farming; they accumulate during the pruning of the olive trees (about 25kg of byproducts (twigs and leaves) per tree annually) and can be found in large amounts in olive oil industries after being separated from fruits before processing (about 10% of the weight of olives). Several reports have shown that olive leaves have antioxidant activity, anti-HIV properties, anti-proliferative and apoptotic effects, protective effect against human leukemia, lipid-lowering activity.

The leaf is the primary site of plant metabolism at the level of both primary and secondary plant products and can be considered as a potential source of bioactive compounds. Numerous studies have been focused on the composition of olive leaves based on phenolic compounds considering their richness of such valuable compounds [2].

Antioxidant Properties of Olive Leaf

Olive leaf contains polyphenols, type of antioxidants which play an important role in the prevention of various diseases associated with oxidative stress (for example cancer, Alzheimer's and cardiovascular disease). According to some studies, olive leaf extract contains even more antioxidants than green tea extract. Phenolic compounds in olive leaves are numerous and of diverse nature. They are grouped with regard to major molecular characteristics as simple phenols and acids, lignans, secoiridoids and flavonoids, including flavones (luteolin-7-glucoside, apigenin-7-glucoside, diosmetin-7-glucoside, luteolin, and diosmetin), flavonols (rutin), flavan-3-ols (catechin), substituted phenols (tyrosol, hydroxytyrosol, vanillin, vanillic acid, and

caffeic acid), and oleuropein. Oleuropein, related secoiridoids, and other derivatives are the principal compounds of olive leaves among which the major compound frequently reported is oleuropein. Flavonoids may occur in appreciable amounts. Simple phenols and acids are present in lower amounts. However, several factors may influence the qualitative and quantitative phenolic composition of olive leaves among which we can cite date of collection, drying conditions, cultivation zone, extraction procedure, and cultivar.

Olive Leaf Extract

In the last few years, olive leaf extract has become really popular because various studies have shown that it helps to boost immune system, fight bacteria and viruses and even lower blood pressure (albeit, there is conflicting clinical evidence for this health benefit). Olive leaf extract is a result of a process when olive leaves are steeped in alcohol for a period of time. This method extracts beneficial polyphenols from olive leaves and creates a powerful product which can treat minor ailments. Olive leaf extract can be consumed in a liquid, powder or capsule form.

When making an olive leaf tea infusion you have to ensure you steep it for at least 8 minutes so that you still get beneficial polyphenols released into your 'tea'. For this you would use loose, dried olive leaves. Most of the research around olive leaf health benefits has focused on olive leaf extract but when it comes to olive leaf infusion, I couldn't find any studies around that. I believe, however, that the extract is more concentrated while infusion is not as concentrated but you still get benefits when drinking it. Moroccans have been consuming an infusion of olive leaf for a long time so there's no doubt there are benefits of doing so.

Olive Leaf Tea

Olive Leaf Tea may be the solution for you, if you are seeking an alternative to green tea without the caffeine and with the increased health benefits. Green tea already has a reduced amount of caffeine when compared to coffee or black tea. However, if you want a zero caffeine solution then the option is a herbal olive leaf infusion. Welcome this wonderful tea and lead a healthier life! This tea is made from dried olive leaves and olive tree bark. The olive tree (*olea europaea*) is native to the Mediterranean region,

Asia and Africa. It is a small evergreen tree with 4 to 10 cm long green silvery leaves and small white flowers. Tea made with olive leaves has been in use for medicinal purposes since the Ancient Egyptians and olive oil was considered to be sacred in Ancient Greece, being used to light the lamps of temples and to fuel the flame of the ancient Olympic Games [3].

The olive branch, a symbol of peace since biblical times, contains the secrets to so many health benefits that it certainly deserves its place in our history. The unprocessed olive leaf contains oleuropein, an antioxidant responsible for most of its health benefits, as well as several other polyphenols and flavonoids. Today the olive is ever present in Mediterranean cuisine and olive oil holds the reputation of being one of the healthiest cooking oils. Let's then look at some of the best known health benefits this smooth golden tea has to offer [4].

Benefits of Olive Leaf Tea

This tea will help you to lower blood pressure in cases of hypertension. If you are currently taking any medication, please don't skip the side effects section on this page, it contains some important tips if this is your case. It is good for your heart, because it dilates coronary veins, increasing the blood flow and thus helping to regulate your heart beat. It is no wonder that it may help to relieve arrhythmias. Olive leaf tea is caffeine free. This means you will receive a boost of energy without the harmful effects caffeine. Having problems with your cholesterol level? This tea reduces levels of bad cholesterol (LDL), helping your heart to be beat to a much healthier rhythm. Olive leaf extract has double the antioxidant capacity of green tea and four times the content of Vitamin C, that's why this tea is said to be an alternative to green tea. Antioxidants present help fight free radicals from their action against your body, they are highly reactive chemical substances, that oxidized can cause cellular damage, so this tea is helpful for detoxification of your body of carcinogens and harmful chemicals. Some research shows that

antioxidants can help to treat tumors, cancers such as liver, breast, and prostate cancer.

Still this is a preliminary study. Tea is best known for its preventive action in these circumstances, maintaining normal DNA repair. This tea stimulates the immune system. Infusion made with olive leaves and olive tree bark can bring down fevers and fight germs. Is the cold season coming? Then it's best to know that this tea fights colds and the flu. Many studies indicate that olive leaf herbal tea produces anti-viral action in the body, as it stops viral replication in cells. It is anti-fungal, antibacterial and anti-inflammatory, in other words, it is natural killer of pathogens by stopping their reproduction process. For example, tea made from olive leaves fights yeast infections and viral infections, such as herpes. It aids in the treatment of chronic fatigue and allergies. Additional help may come for those who suffer from rheumatism or gout by drinking this herbal infusion. It may help prevent muscle spasms. And it is said to aid the prevention of shingles [5].

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