

## TEAS: A NATURAL HISTORY

In the famous Chinese story, around 2700 BC, the Chinese emperor Shen Nung drank some water after some leaves had been blown into it, changing the color. He was pleased and continued to experiment with the brewing of different leaves. The common tea leaf is from the plant *Camellia sinensis*, a flowering shrub native to China (*sinensis* actually means Chinese in Latin). Over time, this practice spread around the world and we now have many types of teas that are brewed using the leaves, flowers, buds, and twigs from a variety of plants from which we garner important nutrients and minerals.

You may ask how this affects your birds. Though water quality is important for our avian companions, what birds drink in the wild is far from sterile. It is commonly known that many species of birds visit water sources like tree hollows in which plant components leach their tannins and other compounds and minerals. And many of us have seen wild birds drinking from "dirty" puddles and other water sources that are brewing with fallen leaves.

Different types of *Camellia* teas are commonly used and they differ according to the time the leaves are harvested and the process used to prepare them. They also differ in their benefits to animal physiology. It is important to mention that *Camellia* teas contain caffeine so they should be decaffeinated by way of a natural process using CO<sub>2</sub> and/or water, not chemically treated. The younger the buds and leaves, the more caffeine. Many commercial teas may say "naturally decaffeinated" but use ethyl acetate which should be avoided. It is essential to choose your teas wisely and buy organic loose teas whenever possible.



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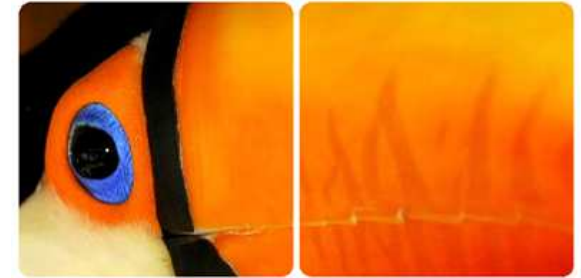
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NOT JUST SURVIVE

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# Teas & Their Many Health Benefits

SOME OF THE TEAS WE PROVIDE INCLUDE:

## *Calming Skin & Feather*

Calendula, chamomile, red clover

Calendula is well known as a healing flower and chamomile calms the mind. When used together, and combined with the anti-inflammatory power of red clover, they make a powerful and effective tea for birds with skin and feather issues.

## *Immune Boost*

Green tea (decaf), hibiscus, rose, rose hips, Tulsi leaves

Green tea possesses potent antioxidants that help to boost the immune system and roses and hibiscus are great sources of vitamin C which helps support that function. Tulsi, known for its immunomodulating effects rounds out the ingredients that will help keep your bird happy and healthy.

## *ReproCalm*

Raspberry leaf, red clover, chamomile, fennel seed, Tulsi leaves

Raspberry Leaf tea is a potent female tonic as it helps pass eggs with less complication and helps regulate hormonal levels. Other ingredients help calm the bird in this time of stress as well as provide important nutrients that help during the reproductive process.

## *Avian Detox*

Black tea (decaf), hibiscus, rose, rose hips, dandelion leaf, milk thistle seed

Black tea possesses antioxidants that promote healthy blood flow and other ingredients help to support organ function, namely organs that filter like liver and kidneys

## *DigestAid*

Chamomile, peppermint, red rooibos, fennel seed

Chamomile and peppermint teas are very effective in settling digestive upset and calming the nerves and other ingredients help to prime the digestive system.

## *RespAid*

Red clover, lavender, red rooibos, star anise seed

Anise seed tea is effective in treating respiratory irritation like bronchitis. Coupled with the calming effects of lavender and the anti-inflammatory benefit of red clover and rooibos, this tea helps soothe an irritated respiratory system.

## *Fat Burner*

Green tea (decaf), jasmine flowers, hibiscus, Tulsi leaves

Jasmine, long known for its ability to reduce fat and cholesterol absorption, is blended with the power of green tea, also known to help burn the fat.

### Brewing Hints:

- Use hot, not boiling water to make tea.
- Always begin with 1 teaspoon of tea to 8-10 ounces of hot water. Increase or dilute to bird's preference.
- Let the tea cool completely before offering it to your birds.
- Remove tea bags or strainers before serving.
- If your bird is suspicious, steep tea for a shorter period (make tea more dilute).
- Substitute tea for water when making beans, pasta, rice, etc or when baking.
- Use topically in spray bottle (avoid spoilage).
- Never completely replace water with tea!

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### TEA IS SERVED!



When first provided with tea, some birds will be suspicious so it is important to note that some birds may need to start out with weak tea and increase the concentration as they become familiar with it over time. You should always brew tea in hot, but not boiling, water to maximize steeping ability. It is also recommended to make use of a stainless steel mesh tea steeper when brewing tea and to always remove it before serving. It is not recommended to completely replace water with tea, however, so as to avoid dehydration if the bird chooses not to readily accept the tea provided.

If your bird is still suspicious, there are other ways to glean the benefits of tea. When cooking for your bird, it is quite easy to substitute tea for water when preparing beans, rice, pasta and other items that are prepared in hot water. Baking is another opportunity to incorporate tea by replacing water with tea in the recipe for bird bread, muffins or another concoction your birds prefer. Offering certain teas without steeping them is another option, as small birds love to eat flowers, for example, within their dry food mix. We also roll items like chamomile or calendula flowers into our daily fresh fruit mixture for our birds to increase and diversify the nutritional content of every bite.

The use of tea is yet one more way to incorporate additional items to the diet and increase the amount of vitamins and minerals in your daily regimen. Teas can also serve as a great enrichment tool, using a different kind each day to keep things interesting. The many methods discussed here will hopefully allow you to provide more diversity in your birds' diets and help your birds to not just survive, but thrive.

**HELPING YOUR BIRDS THRIVE,  
NOT JUST SURVIVE**