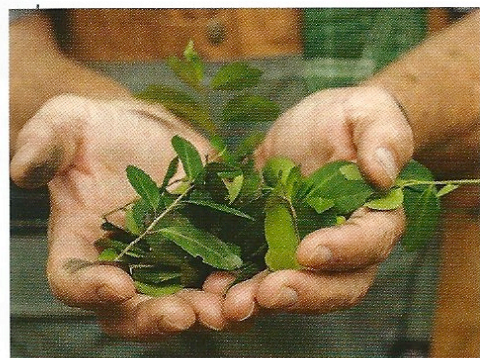




THOMANN
PICKS, DRIES
AND ROASTS
THE LEAVES
THAT GROW
WILD TO MAKE
YAUAPON TEA.



Indigenous Elixir

COFFEE GETS A LOT OF LOVE AS THE PICK-ME-UP DRINK OF CHOICE, BUT TEA IS MAKING ITS COMEBACK IN THE SOUTH.

ANGELA GUNN | PHOTOGRAPHY BY IVAN FEIGN

The Native Americans called it the Big Medicine Black drink. The English called it Carolina tea. The Spanish called it Indian chocolate and yet, even though it's indigenous to the Southeast, Yaupon tea fell out of favor with locals years ago.

"There is some mystery as to why it faded away—the Indians dispersed, and the trading companies from the East dumped coffee and tea into the Americas and it became a status drink. In fact, during the Civil War when the South didn't have much, the South was drinking Yaupon tea," says Lou Thomann, local business owner and Savannah Yaupon enthusiast.

"It became déclassé, but if they had known how good it was for 'em, it may have not," he says. With the help of the local food movement, Yaupon tea is making its comeback. Thomann, who discovered the drink while on a charity trip to Ossabaw Island, started a home business growing and packaging the tea for local consumers. He was inspired to share his discovery with the community after he drank the

tea for the first time and loved it.

Made from the leaves of the Yaupon holly tree, otherwise known as the Beloved Tree, Yaupon tea holds many of the same health and wellness benefits that other teas and coffee provide. Flavonoids, which are known to reduce the risk of cancer, heart disease, asthma and stroke, are found in Yaupon. Another benefit is the presence of natural antioxidants chlorogenic acid and coumaric acid, which help to fight oxidative stress on the body's cells the same way that blueberries and green tea do. Yaupon also packs the caffeine boost found in many Asian teas.

Currently, Thomann picks Yaupon leaves that grow wild in the woods. He washes, dries and roasts the leaves before packaging them in tea bags. The tea can be purchased directly from Thomann or through Leoci's Restaurant. Thomann plans to expand his business soon; he has 20,000 seedlings and is in the process of choosing land where he can begin a farm.

FILL YOUR THERMOS WITH THESE TEAS THIS WINTER

These popular teas, available at local health food stores like Brighter Day, also offer vitamin and antioxidant boosts to your daily diet.

ROOIBOS TEA - Known for its high Vitamin C content along with a variety of other minerals, Rooibos tea can also help with common skin conditions and has antioxidant benefits, too.

MILK THISTLE AND DANDELION TEA - As well as aiding the digestive process, this tea is also a liver cleanser that rejuvenates the liver and helps it to function at a higher capacity.

CHAMOMILE TEA - Well known for its stress relieving properties, chamomile helps to combat insomnia in addition to aiding digestion after a meal. It is also recommended for colds or fevers and can help with coughs and bronchitis.

OOLONG TEA - One study found that the antioxidants in oolong helped to lower bad cholesterol levels. The Wuyi variety is also said to help with weight loss.

75.1
SAVANNAH LIFE
EXPECTANCY

HEART DISEASE
#1 CAUSE
of
DEATH

TOTAL
HOSPITAL
ADMISSIONS
48,078

TOTAL
PHYSICIANS
774