

Specialty Teas



SPEARMINT

(*Mentha spicata* – Caffeine Free Traditional Drinking Herb)

Country of Origin: USA **Region:** Washington State **Shipping Port:** Seattle **Altitude:** 2500 – 4500 feet above sea level

Grade: Whole Leaf, Cut (2nd Cut – best cut) and Sifted **Manufacture Type:** Field grown, sun dried, machine milled

Cup Characteristics: A pungent cool fresh taste that takes your breath away.

Infusion: Tending greenish with bright green infused leaf

Ingredients: Luxury natural dried spearmint.

Information:

Mint has an amazing variety of colors, aspects and aromas. The basic odor is fresh, piquant and peppery, but can vary with each type of mint. All the varieties of mint belong to the same botanical family, Labiatae, and their lavender or rose-colored flowers blossom all summer long. In an early Greek myth, Persephone, the queen of the underworld, became angry at her husband's wandering eye, especially when Hades noticed a young nymph names Minthe. One day, in a fit of jealousy, she turned the lovely woman into mint. Armed with this story, Hippocrates warned men to use mint cautiously.

Spearmint, *mentha spicata*, also known as garden mint, balm mint or Notre-Dame mint, is one of the most well known and commonly found varieties. Its narrow leaves are deep green and its flowers are grouped together in pointed 'spearhead' formation. Spearmint is highly appreciated for its digestive properties and its ability to relieve nausea especially due to motion sickness. Quite often it is also used to find relief from headaches and tension. Inhaling the steam from a double strength infusion will help relieve nasal congestion. Mint tea can also be used in compresses to soothe itching and inflammation. In the olden days, some doctors claimed mint was an effective aphrodisiac. In the book - *The Taste of Morocco*, Robert Carrier notes that mint tea is used to "cure insomnia, calm the nerves, sharpen the senses and wake up those who are drowsing". As with any herb, if you begin 'taking it' for medicinal reasons, you should do so along with a doctor's consultation.

Mint is lovely when blended with lime, but also works marvelously with balm, green anise, vervain, orange blossom and licorice. Mint is a traditional drink in North Africa and the Middle East and is always served to welcome friends, family or visitors from afar. It is very often prepared using green tea - generally gunpowder tea.

RECIPE FOR MOROCCAN MINT TEA

Place 2 or 3 tsp. of green gunpowder or black tea into a teapot and add boiling water. Allow tea to steep for 3 minutes. Add a small handful of spearmint and let stand for 1 minute. Add sugar (about 1 tsp. per serving), and serve very hot in small glasses.

Hot tea brewing method: Bring freshly drawn cold water to a rolling boil. Place 1/2 to 1 teaspoons of spearmint for each cup into the teapot. Pour the boiling water into the teapot. Cover and let steep for 3-7 minutes according to taste (the longer the steeping time the stronger the flavor). Pour into your cup. Milk or sugar is not generally added to the cup.

Iced tea-brewing method: (to make 1 liter/quart): Place 6 teaspoons of spearmint into a teapot or heat resistant pitcher. Pour 1 1/4 cups of freshly boiled water over the tea. Steep for 5 minutes. Quarter fill a serving pitcher with cold water. Pour the tea into your serving pitcher straining the leaves. Add ice and top-up the pitcher with cold water. Garnish and sweeten to taste. [A rule of thumb when preparing fresh brewed iced peppermint is to double the strength of the hot brew since it will be poured over ice and diluted with cold water.]