

Time for tea

Using flavour ingredients to create authentic tea flavours

The pursuit of a healthy lifestyle has led many consumers to seek alternative drinks to satisfy their desire for a new, flavourful beverage. As a result, demand for teas has soared. And, according to a recent report, tea sales are expected to grow from an estimated US\$7.4 billion in 2007 to nearly US\$15 billion in 2012. Beverage manufacturers are now keener than ever to tap into this lucrative market.

In view of this significant potential, beverage manufacturers must ensure that they deliver a consistent, high quality product to retain consumer loyalty while providing a clear point of differentiation. For the consumer, a good ready-to-drink (RTD) tea must confer an authentic, refreshing flavour, while for the manufacturer, it should remain simple to produce. Using specific flavour ingredients which deliver the desired flavour profile are critical for success. Compatibility with other ingredients or nutraceuticals is also essential.

Flavour and fragrance ingredients specialist, Treatt USA, is one company already supporting beverage companies in their quest to enter the RTD tea markets or improve their existing products. Its portfolio of tea flavour ingredients offers an authentic tea taste that deliver the often subtle aroma necessary to create delicious, thirst-quenching beverages. Here, we examine two popular types of RTD tea – green tea and iced tea – and assess the latest ingredients available to create authentic tea flavours.



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Going green

Green tea is currently experiencing a surge in popularity and is one of the fastest growing segments in the international tea market. Originating from China, it is associated with many cultures in Asia from Japan to the Middle East. Over the past decade, the appeal of green tea has broadened to cover the rest of the world.

As with all basic tea varieties, green tea originates from the leaves of the *Camellia sinensis* bush. What distinguishes the different types of tea, however, is the processing they undergo. The distinct, light taste profile and delicate aroma of green tea is due to minimal oxidation during processing. This results in a tea with an appealing aroma which is fresher and grassier than black tea. Replicating this distinctive flavour in a RTD green tea is vital to secure repeat purchase.

Ice cool

Iced tea is made using black tea leaves which are fermented after plucking to create a stronger tea taste. When first introduced at the beginning of the 20th century, iced tea was combined with the familiar flavours of lemon and sugar. This uncomplicated recipe meant that iced tea was seen as a simple and natural beverage to be enjoyed by everyone. Historically, hot water was blended with the leaves and then left to brew. However, this archaic method can often lead to flavour changes and loss of aroma. Clearly, alternative ingredients and production methods are required if an iced tea is to capture the public's imagination.

An authentic true tea taste

Treatt USA has overcome these processing challenges to offer manufacturers effective solutions. By cold-steeping selectively blended tea leaves and then using the latest technology and equipment to brew, capture and concentrate the aromatic tea flavour components, the company has set a new standard for iced tea. It has also addressed the safety and sanitation problems associated with the use of tea powders or steam and chemically derived tea concentrates.

The TrueTaste® range of concentrates has been formulated to deliver a fresh home-style tea flavour with improved aroma. Available in both green tea and ice tea options, TrueTaste products use the same manufacturing process employed in the development of the company's Treattarome™ natural distillates. They also provide the same authentic top notes.

Made from select green leaves, TrueTaste Green Tea is available in either 200-fold or 400-fold concentrates and provides a high impact, fresh brewed green tea aroma and delicate amine-like back-end typical of green tea. The concentrates combine immediately with water to produce a powerful green tea taste. Easy to use, they eliminate the need to brew tea leaves, saving time and cost. TrueTaste Green Tea concentrates produce a clear drink that avoids the hazy appearance of some green tea products. TrueTaste Green Tea concentrates are also particularly suitable for packaging in PET containers. Plus, when combined with other flavours such as honey, lemon, ginger or nutraceuticals, they deliver good results.

The iced tea option, TrueTaste Iced Tea, confers a potent fresh brewed iced tea taste with a full brewed tea aroma. This comes from the selected blends of orange pekoe teas. In a finished beverage, they provide a deep robust fermented back note, coupled with the inherent astringency associated with a quality tea. They are also a cost-effective option with five gallons of TrueTaste Iced Tea 200-fold making 1,000 gallons of RTD iced tea or 400-fold yielding 2,000 gallons. In addition, TrueTaste can be used to create flavoured teas by mixing with other natural Treattarome products, such as raspberry, guava, mango or honey. Caffeine-free options of both TrueTaste Black and Green Teas are also available.

Summary

With RTD teas set to feature prominently on consumer shopping lists for many years to come, many drinks manufacturers are looking to tap into this dynamic sector. High-quality flavour ingredients play a pivotal role in the development of authentic tasting RTD teas. And with the innovative options now available, entering the tea market has never been easier. **FBA**

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