



Dandelion Root Coffee

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Dandelion root coffee is actually a tea made from the roasted roots of dandelion plants (*Taraxacum officinale*).

It is commonly referred to as “coffee” because it brews into a dark-coloured liquid that appears much like coffee. However, it does not contain caffeine and is not related to the coffee plant.

The taste of dandelion coffee has been compared to a combination of real coffee, chocolate and caramel. Some people say it has a bitter taste, but this can be improved by adding natural sweeteners.

Dandelion coffee is sometimes used for weight loss, as a diuretic or laxative and as a digestive aid.

Nutrients in Dandelion Root Coffee

There is no caffeine in natural dandelion root coffee. Some herbal blends marketed as dandelion coffee contain other ingredients like dates, figs, chicory, malted barley, sugar beets and rye.

Pure dandelion root coffee contains several plant chemicals which are associated with purported health benefits. This beverage is a source of large amounts of a nondigestible carbohydrate called inulin.

Inulin is a “prebiotic” fiber that is being studied for its effects on digestive health. It slows down digestion, makes you feel fuller for longer. It also helps to increase beneficial gut bacteria like the probiotic strains Bifidobacteria and Lactobacilli.

Research also shows that inulin can reduce blood levels of triglycerides and decrease the production of very low density lipoproteins – more commonly known as VLDL cholesterol.

In addition to inulin, Dandelion root coffee contains a flavonoid called quercetin. Also found in grape skins and green tea, quercetin is being studied widely for its apparent anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties.

Dandelion roots also contain caffeic acid, luteolin, chicoric acid and chlorogenic acid. This root is also a good source of potassium, magnesium and calcium, as well as vitamins K, C and A.

How to Make Dandelion Root Coffee

Well it is simple to make your own dandelion root coffee at home. Many people also use dandelions to make wine, salads and other foods and beverages.

To brew this coffee substitute, it is recommended to harvest dandelion roots away from cities because these areas are more likely to be affected by pesticides and other harmful toxins that this plant can absorb.

In order to harvest a dandelion root, use a shovel to dig all the way around the plant. Lift the entire plant out of the ground gently, and then shake off the loose dirt. You will need quite a few roots to prepare a good-sized container of ground dandelion coffee.

Note that all parts of dandelions are nutritious. The greens are very healthy and can be steamed, sautéed and/or used in a number of food recipes. They make good ingredients for green juice recipes as well.

Wash the roots thoroughly, removing all dirt. Then you need to either cut the roots up into small pieces, or place them in a food processor. Next, place the chopped up roots on a baking tray and spread them out into a single layer.

Place the tray in a preheated oven at 220°F and leave to heat for an hour. Take the tray out of the oven and redistribute the root pieces on the tray. Place them back in the oven and allow them to continue to dry out slowly.

After the chopped up roots are dehydrated, take them out of the oven and move them around again on the tray. Turn the heat up to 325°F and place the tray back in the oven. Check every fifteen minutes or so until the roots are the desired brown/red color. Do not allow them to begin smoking.

Leave the roasted roots to cool completely and then place them in a sealable jar for storage. To make a cup of dandelion root coffee or tea, use approximately one tablespoon and a half of the roasted roots for each cup of water.

Allow the roots to heat slowly in water without boiling. Let them steep for at least 20 minutes at a low heat setting. Then, simply strain the roots from the water with a sieve or cheesecloth and pour the dandelion root coffee in a cup.

Many people like the natural taste of dandelion coffee – and some like to add milk, cream, honey and other additives they use in regular coffee.

Benefits and Side Effects of Dandelion Root Coffee

Some allergic reactions have been reported from dandelion pollen. Mouth sores and contact dermatitis have been reported in people sensitive to the pollen.

The phytochemicals in dandelion roots can interact with certain types of medications and herbal supplements. Be careful using dandelion root tea with blood thinners, lithium, antacids, diuretics, antidiabetic drugs and/or P450 cytochrome substrate medications.

Be careful if drinking dandelion root coffee while taking herbal supplements like angelica, turmeric, ginger, garlic, ginseng and cloves. Like dandelions, these herbs may increase the risks of bleeding in those with bleeding disorders.

You should ask your doctor about drinking dandelion tea if you have a bleeding disorder, kidney disease, gallstones or any other serious health condition. Make sure your doctor knows about all medications and supplements you take.