



Pau d'arco is native to South America, where it has been used to treat a wide range of conditions. There are reports of medicinal uses of pau d'arco tea dating back to 1873. Pau d'arco, also called *tabebuia avellanedae*, is a tree from the Bignoniaceae family.

The bark and wood of the tree are used externally and internally to treat arthritis, pain, inflammation of the prostate gland, fever, dysentery, boils and ulcers, and various cancers. One of the easiest ways to use pau d'arco is by consuming a tea made from the inner bark of pau d'arco or applying the tea water to the skin. There are nearly 100 species of pau d'arco, but only a few yield high-quality material; plus, it takes extremely skilled gatherers to know what species are the most effective. The medicinal part of the tree is the bark, specifically the inner lining of the bark, called the phloem (pronounced floam). Unfortunately, many companies use the whole bark, containing the dead wood too, and this naturally dilutes the activity of the material.

Scientists have identified two active chemicals in pau d'arco called naphthoquinones; they are lapachol and beta-lapachone. These chemicals have the power to kill bacteria, fungi, viruses and parasites. They have also shown anti-inflammatory properties, which are important in treating health conditions such as osteoarthritis.

Seven Pau D'arco Tea Benefits

1. Reduces Pain: Research shows that pau d'arco tea has the power to naturally reduce pain in patients suffering from cancer and other serious health conditions. It has the ability to lessen the pain associated with several kinds of cancer, especially cancer of the prostate, liver or breast. Arthritic pain is also been relieved after consuming pau d'arco tea.

A 2001 study published in *BMC Pharmacology* examined the antinociceptive (pain-reducing) and antiedematogenic (to reduce swelling) effects of pau d'arco inner bark that were measured by experimental models in mice that underwent pain stimulated by nerve cells. The inner bark aqueous extract, administered orally in three different concentrations, reduced the sensory process that provides the signals that lead to pain.

2. Fights Candida: Pau d'arco helps the body fight candida the natural way. Candida, also known as candidiasis, is a common yeast infection that can lead to many health problems, from a sore throat to serious stomach problems. The body normally produces yeast in the mouth, vagina, rectum and digestive tracts, and in normal amounts it remains harmless; however, if the body's natural pH balance is upset, candida symptoms can quickly grow out of control.

If you are suffering from headaches, an inability to concentrate, hyperactivity, chronic fatigue syndrome, sugar addiction and stomach problems, you may be suffering from an overproduction of yeast and candida. A common symptom is thrush, which is an overgrowth of yeast in the mouth or vagina. If left untreated, candida weakens the immune system — allowing more serious diseases to take hold.

3. Reduces Inflammation: An overactive immune system results in the body being flooded with defense cells and hormones that damage tissues. Dietary and environmental toxins build up in the body, and this turns the immune system on — keeping it highly reactive; this is what lead to inflammation, which is at the root of most diseases. By reducing inflammation in the body, you avoid serious health conditions like asthma, arthritis, Crohn's disease, Alzheimer's disease, cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol levels and Parkinson's disease.

A 2014 study published in *The Journal of Toxicological Sciences* found that pau d'arco increased the expression of Nrf2-target genes in the intestine. Nrf2 is a protein that regulates the expression of antioxidant proteins that protect against oxidative damage triggered by injury and inflammation. The results of this study shows that the activation of Nrf2 could mediate the beneficial effects of pau d'arco, particularly in the intestine, which can be severely affected by inflammation.

4. Heals Ulcers: Ulcers are burns that form in the lining of the upper part of the gastrointestinal tract. When they occur in the stomach, they're called gastric ulcers. If they form in the first part of your small intestine, the duodenum, they're referred to as duodenal ulcers. Peptic ulcer disease begins when a weakness in your stomach or intestinal lining allows acid to create an erosion or sore in the lining. It's the most common type of stomach disease, according to the American Gastroenterology Association. Ulcers are caused by an increase in stomach acid caused by stress, medications, diet, smoking, alcohol or *H. pylori*, a type of bad bacteria. The most common ulcer symptom is a burning pain aggravated by stomach acid that comes in contact with the ulcerated area. A 2013 study published in *Phytotherapy Research* found that pau d'arco extract significantly accelerated the healing of acetic acid induced gastric ulcers in rats by increasing mucus content and cell proliferation. This suggests that pau d'arco could be a treatment for peptic ulcer diseases in humans. Peptic ulcers refer to painful sores or ulcers that are in the lining of the stomach or first part of the small intestine, called the duodenum. This is typically a result of an imbalance of digestive fluids in the stomach and intestine. An infection occurs, and too much bad bacteria leads to symptoms, including burning pain, nausea, internal bleeding, heartburn and bloating.

5. Fights Cancer: One of the most well-known benefits of pau d'arco tea is its ability to fight cancer and relieve pain associated with cancer. A study conducted by the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston found that beta-Lapachone, a major compound in pau d'arco tea, is a potential compound to be added to cancer chemotherapy, particularly for prostate cancer. Another 2002 study concluded that beta-lapachone is one of a few novel anticancer drugs currently under active investigation, and it shows promise for chemotherapy alone and especially in combinations. This powerful compound caused cancer cell death in mice, and the mice did not appear to be adversely affected by the treatment.

6. Provides Antiviral & Antifungal Properties: For thousands of years, pau d'arco has been used as an antiviral herb. The range of viruses stunted by pau d'arco tea extends from those that cause the common cold to those that are responsible for the life-threatening AIDS virus. It has been shown to actively inhibit, kill or stunt the growth of several dangerous viruses, including herpes, polio, vesicular stomatitis, avian myeloblastosis, leukemia and rous sarcoma virus. The beta-lapachone present in pau d'arco actually inhibits the enzymes in virus cells, which directly affects the synthesis of DNA and RNA. The virus is then no longer able to take control over the reproductive processes of the cell, so it can neither replicate itself nor infect other cells. Pau d'arco tea has the power to aid in the healing of skin wounds and infections. It's commonly used to reduce redness and swelling due to skin infections and irritations. This is because of its antifungal and antibacterial properties.

7. Detoxifies the Body: Pau d'arco tea detoxifies the body by removing harmful toxic substances; these toxins include heavy metals, pesticides, preservatives and even residue from chemotherapy. Pau d'arco works as a detoxifier by having a laxative effect. It's known to loosen bowels, which aids digestion and regularity. By stimulating the digestive system, pau d'arco tea helps the body rid itself of excess fats and toxins. It's important to keep foods moving through your body, especially the colon. The colon is the body's sewage system, but like all healthy and properly functioning sewage systems, it needs to be cleaned, emptied and maintained to function properly. When we eat highly processed, refined or "fake" foods, our colons become laden with the unhealthy debris from these foods. For this reason, it's vital to consume detoxifying foods and drinks, like pau d'arco tea, in order to maintain a clean and healthy body. Pau d'arco tea consumption is one of the best ways to detox; blood vessels, the lymph system, cells, tissue and organs are all detoxified, which allows the body's systems to function properly and efficiently.

Pau D'arco Tea Nutrition Facts

Pau d'arco tea contains several compounds, including quinoids, benzenoids and flavonoids. These compounds have shown biological activity against harmful organisms. Pau d'arco also has a significant amount of lapachol, which comes from the stem of the tree. According to the U.S Department of Agriculture, lapachol is known to be toxic and resistant to nearly all types of harmful organisms. A 2005 study published in Oncology Reports found that lapachol has great potential as an application in fighting metastasis, which is the spread of a cancer or other disease from one organ of the body to another. Metastasis is the major process responsible for the death in cancer patients, and the recent research involving lapachol is promising.

Lapachol is also used for its antioxidant and antimicrobial effects, but some research suggests that high doses of this compound can lead to dangerous side effects, like reproductive toxicity. Pau d'arco also contains another chemical called beta-lapachone, which has also demonstrated toxicity to harmful organisms, similar to lapachol.

Another powerful element of pau d'arco is selenium, an antioxidant that removes free radicals that damage cells and trigger disease. Selenium is an extremely vital mineral for the human body; some selenium benefits include its ability to increase immunity, take part in antioxidant activity that defends the body against free radical damage and inflammation, and play a key role in boosting your metabolism.

According to a study conducted by the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences at the University of Surrey, consuming plenty of naturally occurring selenium has positive antiviral effects, is essential for successful male and female fertility and reproduction, plus reduces the risk of cancer, autoimmune and thyroid diseases. Low selenium status is associated with increased risk of mortality, poor immune function and cognitive decline.

How to Make Pau D'arco Tea

*To prepare as a tea, pour 8 oz. boiling water over 1 to 2 tsp (start off with 1 tsp.) of herb. Cover and steep for 5 to 10 minutes, strain and serve immediately. Start off with small Sips to get use to the astringency of the herb. Ad a little lemon juice so tannins can be absorbed through the colon. You can let cool and dilute further and drink tea in small portions throughout the day if you prefer. Tea water can be used externally .

Possible Side Effects & Interactions of Pau D'arco Tea

When consumed in high doses, pau d'arco is possibly unsafe and can cause nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, dizziness and internal bleeding. If you are using pau d'arco, make sure to keep track of your doses and speak to your health care provider if you notice any of these side effects. Women who are pregnant or breast-feeding should not use pau d'arco because there is not enough studies about the safety of use in pregnancy. Pau d'arco can delay clotting and might interfere with treatment in people with bleeding disorders; it may increase the chances of bruising as well. This can also increase the chance of bleeding during and after surgery. Make sure to stop using pau d'arco at least two weeks before a scheduled surgery or dental work. Also, avoid using blood-clotting medications such as anticoagulant and antiplatelet drugs.

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