



## **Rooibos – When a Tea is not a Tea...**

While much has been written about the benefits of tea, especially green and white teas, Rooibos (say “roy-boss”) has only recently stepped into the spotlight as more scientists are seeing “red” and are studying this marvelous brew, discovering its various benefits and health properties while consumers discover its mild taste and wide range of flavors.

Even though Rooibos is commonly referred to as tea, it is in fact a *Tisane*. The description “tea” is reserved for infusions made from leaves of the evergreen shrub *Camellia Sinensis*. The Rooibos plant (*Aspalathus linearis*), on the other hand, is a unique wispy bush found only in a small part of South Africa’s South Western Cape region. The infusion made from the prepared leaves has been enjoyed for centuries as both a beverage and a health tonic by the local indigenous populations. Rooibos is prepared the same way as any loose leaf tea. It is available natural or with a wide array of flavors. Although Rooibos has been enjoyed widely in Europe for decades, it is relatively new to many Americans and gaining in popularity for many good reasons:

- ❖ **No Caffeine** – Rooibos is naturally caffeine free and can therefore be enjoyed at any time of the day and in unlimited quantities. It is an ideal drink for children or as an evening treat!
- ❖ **Low Tannin** – unlike regular teas which can become bitter because of their tannin content, Rooibos, with its limited amount of tannin provides a pleasantly sweet taste – even if steeped a little too long. Rooibos, prepared as ice tea will always keep its vibrant red color and won’t cloud – a result of tannic acid in tea.
- ❖ **Minerals** – Rooibos is a powerhouse when it comes to health properties. Not only does its antioxidant content compare to that of green and white tea, this tisane is also rich in iron, potassium, calcium, copper, zinc, magnesium, fluoride, manganese and sodium. Rooibos also contains alpha-hydroxyl acid which is known to promote healthy skin and its anti-spasmodic properties can be helpful in relieving mild digestive problems in adults and children.

If you are curious to find out more about this wonderful beverage, the best way is to try a cup of Rooibos – natural or flavored. Hot or iced. After that, it will find its way to your tea shelf very quickly!

*Kerstin Wingert is the Owner of Souvia™ Tea and hold the Specialty Tea Institute’s Level II Certified Tea Education Accreditation*