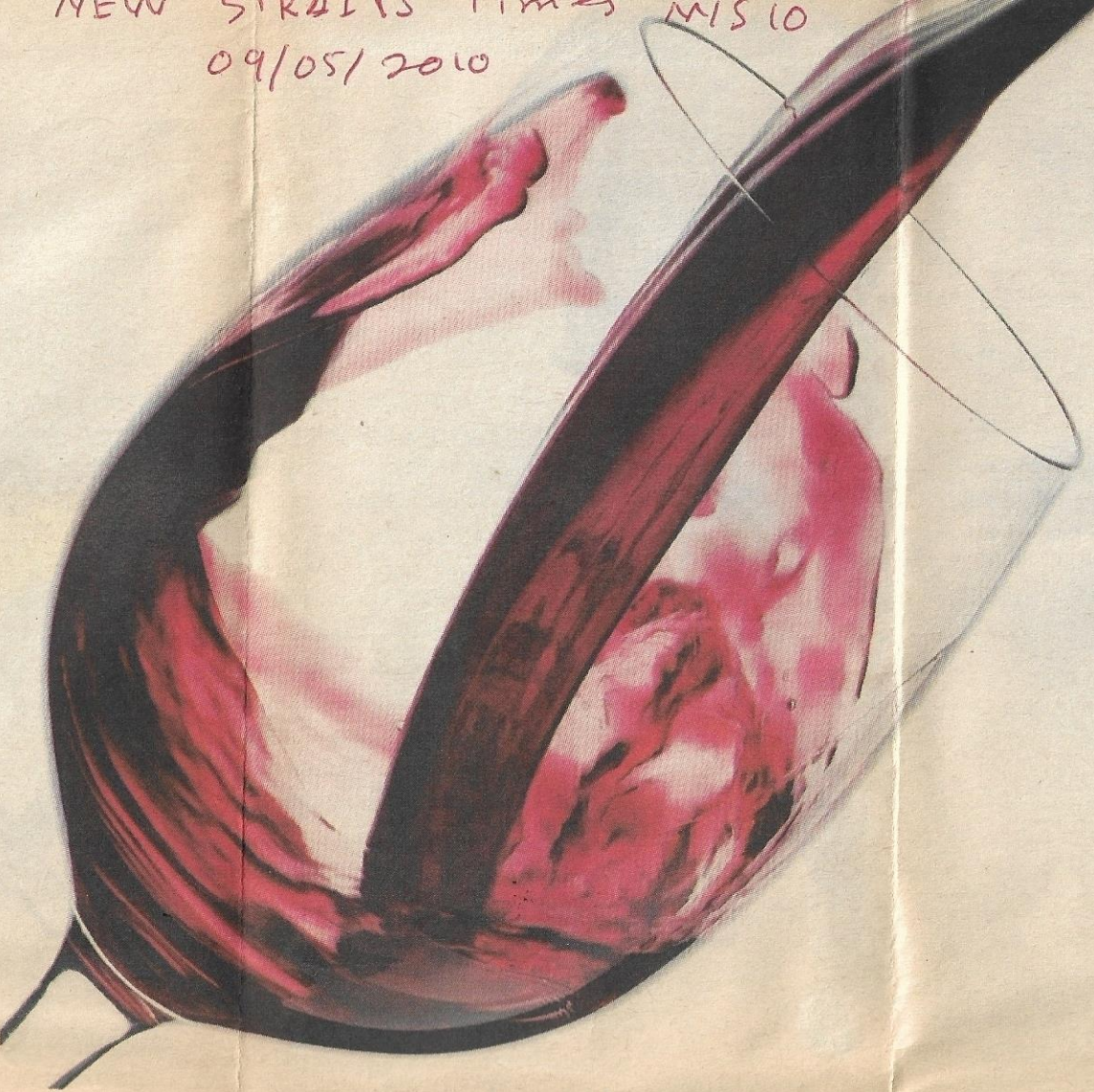


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Green tea, red wine and dark chocolate — three colourful solutions that may help you live longer

IS there any other food or drink that has as many health benefits as green tea? The Chinese have known about its medicinal benefits since ancient times and they use it to treat everything from headaches to depression.

In her book, *Green Tea: The Natural Secret For A Healthier Life*, Nadine Taylor writes that green tea had been used as medicine in China for at least 4,000 years.

Today, scientific research in both Asia and the West is providing hard evidence for the health benefits long associated with green tea.

For example, in 1994, the *Journal Of The National Cancer Institute* published the results of an epidemiological study indicating that drinking green tea reduced the risk of oesophageal cancer in Chinese men and women by nearly 60 per cent. University of Purdue researchers recently concluded that a compound in green tea inhibits the growth of cancer cells. There is also research to indicate that drinking green tea lowers total cholesterol levels, as well as improving the ratio of LDL to HDL.

Eat, drink and live longer



to make this “magic molecule” more bio-available.

Dark Chocolate

The benefits of dark (not white or milk) chocolate comes from the extremely high level of antioxidants found inside its active components.

A Harvard Medical School group studied and reviewed 136 scientific articles published between 1996 and 2005 on chocolate and its ingredients and found that eating 50g of dark chocolate a day may reduce the risk of heart disease by 10.5 per cent and the risk of dying from heart disease by 19 per cent — without any side-effects.

Dark chocolate has other benefits too. Among them are:

- Stimulating endorphin production, which gives a feeling of pleasure
- Acting as an anti-depressant because of its serotonin content
- Acting as a stimulant because of its theobromine, caffeine and other stimulative substances

Some of the fats in chocolate have no effect on your cholesterol levels. The fats in chocolate are ½ oleic acid, ½ stearic acid and ½ palmitic acid.

Oleic acid is a healthy monounsaturated fat that is also found in olive oil.

Stearic acid is a saturated fat but one which research shows has a neutral effect on cholesterol.

However, palmitic acid is a saturated fat, one which raises cholesterol and heart disease risk.

That means only ½ of the fat in dark chocolate is bad for you.

Plus, dark chocolate contains antioxidants universally praised for their ability to fight free-radical damage (which causes ageing). And no substance contains higher concentrations than pure cocoa extract! But be warned: It's very

improving the ratio of good (HDL) cholesterol to bad (LDL) cholesterol.

The great thing about green tea is that it tastes great and does not call for milk or sugar. So in reality, it's a zero-calorie drink!

Harvard researchers speculate that the health benefits of green tea are largely due to its high content of flavonoids — plant-derived compounds that are antioxidants. Green tea is also the best food source of a group of compounds called catechins.

In test tubes, catechins are more powerful than Vitamins C and E in halting oxidative damage to cells and appear to have other disease-fighting properties. Studies have found an association between consuming green tea and a reduced risk for several cancers, including, skin, breast, lung, colon, oesophageal and bladder.

Additional benefits for regular consumers of green and black teas include a reduced risk for heart disease. The antioxidants in green, black and oolong teas can help

cholesterol, increase HDL cholesterol and improve artery function.

A Chinese study published recently in the *Archives Of Internal Medicine* showed a 46-65 per cent reduction in hypertension risk in regular consumers of oolong or green tea, compared with non-tea drinkers.

Red Wine

Red wine is good for anti-ageing but that doesn't mean drinking glasses of red wine will wind back the clock! It's not the alcohol but rather, it's resveratrol, the primary ingredient in red wine, that will make you more youthful and vibrant.

Research groups Howitz and Sinclair reported in 2003 in the journal, *Nature*, that resveratrol significantly extends the life span of yeast. Later studies conducted by Sinclair showed that resveratrol also prolongs the life span of the worm and the fruit fly.

In a review study conducted by Harvard University — which

Nutrition and Metabolism Journal in 2006 — resveratrol was found to extend the life expectancy of every organism that it has been fed to, including yeast, worms and fruit flies.

"The wonder substance seems to work in the same way as drastic calorie cutting to increase life span," the study concluded.

The mechanisms of resveratrol's apparent effects on life extension are not fully understood, but they appear to mimic several of the biochemical effects of calorie restriction.

Some studies indicate that resveratrol activates Sirtuin 1 (SIRT1) and PGC-1a and improves functioning of the mitochondria.

There are many resveratrol supplements in the market, but the scientists recommend that people be wary and find a quality brand that delivers on its promises.

The big issue is that resveratrol is not easily absorbed by the body as it's not water soluble (hence the use of alcohol to carry it).

The great thing about green tea is that it tastes great and does not call for milk or sugar. So in reality, it's a zero-calorie drink!

bitter.
So, there you have it — a colourful solution to longevity — green tea, red wine and brown cocoa! Here's to long life!

