

# Agua de Jamaica (Hibiscus Flower Tea)

The first time I tasted this tea I was at Café Carambola, Latin American café in Coeur d'Alene, ID. They served the most delicious food but the highlight for me was the hibiscus tea, which was served in large goblets with floating flowers. Delicious! This tea is a typical drink served mid-day in Mexico. Hibiscus tea is not only refreshing and helps lower body temperature on hot days, but it also has many medicinal properties including; lowering blood pressure, lowering cholesterol, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, anti-cancer, digestive aid, anti-depressant, and helps maintain healthy blood sugar. Hibiscus tea also has emmenagogue properties, so pregnant woman would be advised to avoid this tea until after labor. In Mexico, they tend to drink their agua de Jamaica (hibiscus tea) extra sweet. I recreated the following recipe for a more tart version of the tea, which includes honey for a more medicinal drink rather than using white sugar. Due to the beautiful red color and heart-healthy benefits of hibiscus, I served this drink in champagne glasses for a Valentine's Day dinner. It was a hit! If you decide to drink this, be careful who is with you. They just might fall in love!



3 ½ cups distilled water + 1 ½ cups to add later  
1 cinnamon stick  
½ cup dried hibiscus flowers  
1/4 cup + 2 Tbsp. raw honey  
1 orange  
2 tsp. pure vanilla extract

1. Boil 3 ½ cups of distilled water and cinnamon stick together. Once water has boiled, add hibiscus flowers, cover and turn off the heat. Steep for 20 minutes.
2. Strain hibiscus flowers, discard cinnamon stick, and set aside hibiscus flowers.
3. Add honey to warm tea and stir until the honey dissolves. Juice the orange and then add the juice and vanilla extract to the tea.
4. Add 1 ½ cups of water or to taste.
5. Garnish with hibiscus flowers or orange slices and chill. Serve cold or with ice. Enjoy!!

Recipe by Sherilyn Long