

Clara Cohen: Many moons ago, I lived and worked in Morocco in North Africa, and even though it was 35 degrees outside, I drank their delicious mint tea every single day.

The Moroccan mint tea is so delicious, and what's interesting about it is that even though the drink is warm, the property of the mint is cooling, so it cooled me down from the inside

I still think about that time because it is such a perfect little snapshot of what tea really is according to Chinese medicine.

Every tea, every leaf, every blend has its own nature, its own flavor, its own job and function to do in the body.

That's what we're gonna talk about today.

I'm gonna walk you through true teas, like green, black tea, oolong, and the herbal teas,

their nature, their flavor, and their function according to TCM. So grab your favorite cup of tea. Let's go.

Welcome to AcuPro, a show dedicated to making Chinese medicine and acupuncture easy to grasp and fun to learn. Hi, I'm your host, Clara Cohen. I support practitioners and students like you in changing the world one patient at a time. My goal is to share my passion for TCM and empower you to achieve superior patient care.

I love to showcase the amazing benefits of acupuncture, because after all, acupuncture rocks

I know you know there's herbal teas and true teas which are caffeinated, right?

But did you know that all true teas come from the same exact plant, the *Camellia sinensis*? Doesn't matter if it's green, white, black, oolong, matcha, same plant. Completely different processing, And that processing is what shapes the nature, the flavor, and the function of each tea.

Let's go through the most common one. Green tea is my favorite. Every morning, my husband has coffee, and I have jasmine green tea. Oh, this just really, really fills my soul with happiness.

Green tea nature is cooling, while black tea, for example, is more warming. The flavor of green tea is bitter, slightly sweet, which helps you understand its function.

It cools the liver, clears heat, and it helps in digestion. This is your tea for a patient running hot with liver heat or excess heat anywhere in the body, irritability. I would not reach for it if someone has yang deficiency or excess cold in the body. The bitterness can be a bit much on a sensitive digestion as well.

So remember, bitter food usually dries dampness, but also is cooling and descending. So if the person's super fatigued, green tea might not be the best bet, specifically if they are yang deficient. Make sense?

The second one is black tea. Black tea is one of the most common tea drank, specifically in England, for example.

It is warming. The flavor of black tea is sweet and slightly bitter. So it's the opposite of green tea, which is more bitter with a bit of sweetness, right? So this one is sweet with slightly bitter. Black tea warms the stomach, support yang, and tonifies the heart.

It's a great pick for a patient who runs cold and needs a gentle yang lift in the morning

The next one is white tea. I know not a lot of people are aware there is white tea or they've never drank white tea. Its nature is also cooling but gentler than green tea. It's sweet. That's it. The function of white tea is to nourish yin, clears heat. So great for patients who are yin deficient or a patient who needs a bit of cooling action without the green tea edge, because the green tea is much more cooling than the white tea

Are you a coffee or a tea person or both? I don't drink coffee. I love my tea. The next one is oolong. Oolong is kind of more neutral, little slightly warm, but not as much as black tea. It is bitter and sweet exactly the same way. Remember, black tea is more sweet with a little bit of bitterness, while oolong is equal bitter and sweet.

Its function is to move qi, dissolves phlegm. Oolong sits between green and black, and it shows clinically too. This is the go-to for liver qi stagnation, stressed people, tight body, and feeling a little stuck. .

The next one is pu-erh tea, which is often quite expensive. If you go to Chinatown in your area, there's a lot of stores that sell really good pu-erh tea. Pu-erh tea is warm, especially if it's aged. The longer it's aged, the warmer its property.

It is sweet and earthy. It has a bit of bitterness, but the bitterness is very, very mild. It tonifies spleen, so great for digestion, resolves dampness, and it helps calm and clear the mind for better focus. It's fermented, and that fermentation is what gives it its deep, earthy quality and its function in drying dampness.

It's great for patients who feel foggy, heavy, specifically after eating, and have a lot of cravings.

I don't know if you remember, but in the '90s, sun-dried tomatoes were very popular. It was very fashionable.

Everybody was putting them everywhere. Then kale. Kale came around and everybody was putting kale everywhere. Well, in the last few years, matcha has been really the fashionable drink for a lot of people.

They do it cool with ice, they do it warm, but matcha is everywhere, right? At every coffee shop. So matcha is cooling and it's concentrated, so it's also bittersweet, kind of like green tea. It clears heat as well, soothes the liver, sharpen the focus. This is essentially green tea in its most concentrated form.

So everything green tea does, matcha does even better or stronger or harder. It's wonderful for mental clarity, but if the patient has yang deficiency where it's very cold, we probably shouldn't give them matcha or recommend matcha. And if the patient drinks iced matcha, that's gonna make it even worse.

So if we recap, matcha is probably the coolest one and the strongest one. Green tea is the next one. Then white tea is between black and green, and then we have black tea, which is warming. Oolong is slightly warm, and pu-erh is the fermented one that is really earthy and clears dampness.

One more that is not always mentioned but a lot of people drink is genmaicha. Genmaicha is sweet, and its function, again, is to strengthen spleen and stomach, harmonize the middle qi. It's a green tea blend with roasted rice. It's very common in Japan

and the rice basically counteract the cooling property of green tea. So that's what genmaicha is. It's a nice middle ground for someone who wants green tea

but has a sensitive digestion or a weak spleen because it's more neutral and less cooling.

AD: If you lack in confidence treating pregnant women, my Complete TCM Treatments for Pregnancy online course is definitely for you. Over the years, I have seen how amazing Chinese medicine is when it comes to treating pregnancy issues, preparing patients for labor, and for post-childbirth recovery. I have helped countless of women through their pregnancy journey from postnatal care to post-childbirth.

I created this course specifically to give you the confidence in treating pregnancy patients successfully and most importantly, safely. You will get six continuing education hours after you pass a multiple-choice quiz and receive a certificate. You can download the PDF versions of the slides. You have access to the course forever, so you can watch it over and over again if you need to.

And I offer a seven-day money-back guarantee because I stand behind my product, and I wanna make sure my courses are very beneficial to you and to your patients. Listen to what people who invested in this course had to say. "Unfortunately, the education I received at school around cervical ripening and induction was extremely minimal.

I appreciate all your resources so much. My patients respond so well when I tweak my treatment to what I have learned through your course. I don't know what I would do without your expertise and your love for sharing TCM. You are the best." This makes my day because this is why I do what I do. To invest in my Complete TCM Treatment for Pregnancy, check out the link in the show notes below, or go to my website, acuproacademy.com, and click the TCM course tab on the menu bar.

Clara Cohen: Let's talk about caffeine for a second because patients ask about this constantly, and it's worth knowing off the top of your head. All true teas have caffeine because it comes from the same plant. What changes the amount of caffeine is the processing and how the leaf is handled and picked, not the color of the liquid like people would assume, right? They think, oh, if it's darker, then it has more caffeine. Actually, matcha has the highest amount of caffeine of all of them because we are drinking the whole ground leaf, not just the steeped infusion. Black tea comes in right after matcha.

Then oolong sits in the middle. Green tea is the one that has the lowest amount of caffeine, and white tea pretty much has just a little bit. So it depends what people wanna do, but we don't wanna overdo it. Pu-erh and genmaicha are very

depending on how they are processed and blended, but they tend to sit in that low to moderate range.

Clinically, this matters beyond just the jitters, right? Caffeine moves qi upward and outward, so a patient who is already anxious, wired, on a fight or flight, or dealing with liver yang rising, that cup of matcha in the afternoon might be working against everything you are doing in treatment because then suddenly they can't sleep and they're awake between one and three AM. This is something to have in your intake or to ask your patient, not just about coffee, but how much tea. Because if the person's having a lot of matcha, they think, "Oh, I'm doing something really healthy," that might not work with your treatment if they already have a lot of liver yang rising, for example, right?

Now we're gonna get into the most common herbal teas. None of them have caffeine because they are not from the tea plant at all

They are a good option to offer a patient who needs to cut back without giving up the ritual of a warm, soothing drink. Herbal teas are a completely different category because they're not from the tea plant. They are herbs, root, flowers, or spices steeped in water.

No caffeine and often a much more targeted focused action than the true teas.

Let's start with my favorite, ginger. In winter, I love lemon ginger or turmeric ginger tea. That is so soothing to my soul.

Obviously, ginger is warm. The flavor is spicy or pungent. The function of is to warm the stomach, expel cold, specifically external cold, and it can help stimulate appetite because it's soothing to the spleen.

This is the best tea for excess cold, painful period with cold sign or cold in the uterus, , someone that has nausea, vomiting, but that gets better with ginger.

Let's say a pregnant woman has morning sickness, and she is on the cold side, meaning she feels cold all the time, ginger's gonna be great. However, if she has morning sickness and she's really hot and overheated, then mint tea, which is also soothing to the stomach and brings stomach's qi down, is much better for that patient.

The next one is goji berry tea. So Gou Qi Zi is the plant or the herb that we learn in TCM. Goji berries are neutral, the flavor is sweet, and the function is to nourish liver and kidney yin, specifically benefiting the eyes. So it's a very

gentle tea. It's a tonic for yin, and it's great for people that have yin deficiency with dry eyes or tired eyes, like they stay in front of the computer all day long.

The next one is mint, so the opposite of ginger for the fact that it's cool, but it also help calms down the stomach. It is spicy as well. It moves liver qi, it clears heat from the head or the eyes and it's much gentler on the digestive system than peppermint.

Peppermint is much more cold, and we don't wanna recommend that too often, specifically in winter, to patients that obviously are deficient or have a lot of yang deficiency.

Then a lot of people don't understand the difference between mint and peppermint. Peppermint is much stronger than mint. It is much cooler. It's still spicy or pungent. It expels wind heat, clears the head, soothes the throat. This is one to reach for when there's a lot of excess heat sign, stress headaches sitting behind the eyes that'll feel better with a cold compress. But I wouldn't overdo the peppermint just because it's much colder than the mint.

One that I love is chrysanthemum. Chrysanthemum flower tea is slightly cooling.

It's very sweet, a little bit of bitterness, and its function is also to cool the liver, bring high blood pressure down, clears liver yang rising. So it's great to calm that irritability or anything that comes up to the eyes like eye infection. We can use chrysanthemum tea externally to put a compress on the eye when there is an eye infection.

Often we see patients with yin deficiency and liver yang rising. This is when you can have a tea of goji berries for the yin deficiency and chrysanthemum for the liver yang rising, specifically when it's affecting the eyes

Another common herbal tea is rooibos. Rooibos tea, which is commonly found in Africa, is mildly warm, it's sweet, it is very gentle on the digestive system. It's super easy to drink every day. It's not a classical Chinese herb or part of a Chinese herbal medicine, but I bring it to the conversation because it is naturally caffeine-free, and it's very gentle, and I love its nutty, sweet flavor.

So it's a nice option for patients with a sensitive spleen or a weak spleen who needs to cut down on caffeine but still want that cup of tea

Licorice root, which is dazao, is neutral and sweet. So it's not warm or cool, which is great because it can be put everywhere. We have to be careful because licorice root should not be recommended for people with high blood pressure.

Its function is to harmonize, tonify spleen qi, and it's really great to harmonize other plant or other teas in a tea blend.

This next one is quite cold, dandelion. We can use the root or the flower. It's often the root that will be sold in store. It's very bitter and a little sweet, but it's very cold. We have to remember that, so we shouldn't take it on a long-term basis.

It clears heat, drain dampness, support the liver and gallbladder. It's very detoxifying. So this is the one to reach for if the patient has liver fire, excess damp heat affecting the liver or gallbladder. But we wanna skip it if someone is yang deficient who has excess internal cold because it's very strong, very cold.

So this is probably the coldest one on the list today. I wouldn't recommend it to take for a long time.

The last one I wanted to mention is a blend, which is chai. Oh my God, I love this blend, specifically in winter. Chai is warming and pungent.

Most of the spice in there are very pungent. We have cinnamon, ginger, cardamom, clove, and sometimes they'll put a black tea in there. Not always, right? You can find them with caffeine or without. It's the best for winter and specifically for patients that are always cold.

AD: Before we continue with today's episode, I wanna share something that honestly feels like a big moment for me. If you've been following me for a while, you know I've always said no to all sponsorships. I've been approached many times, but I turn them all down because if I don't genuinely use a product or love it, I will never recommend it to you.

But today is different. I am super excited to introduce my very first sponsor, drum roll, please, Jane App. I'm also a Jane ambassador, so this is a company I actually use and love. I am saying yes because I've used Jane for years in my own multidisciplinary clinic. Truly, it's the best practice management software and electronic medical record I've ever worked with.

Before Jane, we were using a clunky system that made everything harder than it needed to be. When we switched, the entire clinic felt the difference.

immediately. Jane is built by people who actually understand what it's like to be a practitioner running a busy practice. One of my favorite features is online booking.

There is nothing better than waking up and seeing patients booking their own appointment while I was asleep. Your patients can book when it works for them, and the wait list feature fills last-minute cancellations automatically. I love that. I used to spend so much time calling eight to 10 people just to fill up one spot.

Jane also automates the things we never enjoy doing, like intake forms, reminders, confirmation. It honestly feels like having an extra assistant handling all the moving parts so you can focus on what really matters, which is supporting your patients and being the TCM rockstar practitioner you truly are.

There are so many features I could talk about, but we would be here all day. If you're looking for a system that brings more ease, more clarity, and calm into your practice, I truly recommend Jane. You can check it out at jane.app/demo, and because you're part of the AcuPro community, you can use my code ACUPRO1MO, one month, when you sign up to get a one-month grace period on your new account.

The link and the code are also in the show notes below for you. Now, let's get back to today's episode.

Clara Cohen: Here's the clinical application, matching the tea to the TCM pattern.

Cold, damp spleen, tired, loose stools, feel cold easily, ginger, chai, or rooibos.

Liver qi stagnation, stress, tight chest, irritable, oolong or mint.

Heat pattern, red face, thirsty, irritable, sticky stools, green tea, white tea, chrysanthemum, or peppermint.

Liver fire or damp heat, dandelion.

Wind heat, sore throat, headache behind the eyes, peppermint.

Foggy head, heavy body, sluggish after eating, pu-erh tea. Weak digestion, weak spleen, a gentle tonic like genmaicha, licorice, or rooibos.

Dry eyes, screen fatigue, liver and kidney yin deficiency, goji berries. You can combine it with chrysanthemum if there is some liver yang rising as well.

This is such an easy piece of homework to hand to patients if they like tea. They are already drinking something every day, we are just redirecting what is in their cup

Now, the common mistake I see patient making is they will drink tea because they heard that it's great for the immune system, or it's great for arthritis, It has property in the Western sense. But they don't understand the nature, right? They don't know that this tea is too cooling or it's too drying.

Like ginger is very drying, right? And if the person has a lot of dryness already, drinking a lot of ginger tea is gonna make it worse.

Green tea gets marketed often as this universally healthy antioxidant, great for metabolism. But hand it to a patient with a cold deficient spleen, you can actually genuinely make them feel worse, more tired, more bloated, and colder.

So the tea is not the problem. It's just the wrong tool for that patient.

TCM pattern differentiation matters even for something this small, and honestly, it's a great way to keep our own clinical thinking sharp, too

And if you wanted more on TCM nutrition, I've got you covered. I have a TCM nutrition bundle, two full PDF guides covering the seven most common TCM pattern and the five-element nutrition framework. I created all the visuals so you can hand them to patients, or you can have them in hand in clinic. The link is in the show note below.

Thank you so much for spending your time with me today. I truly hope you benefited from this episode, and I would love for you to share it with a friend that may benefit from it as well.

Follow the show.

Please leave a review. That would be so, so appreciated. And if you want more, of course, go to my website, acupreacademy.com. I have tons of resources there with treatment protocol, case studies, free courses, and so much more.

And you can connect with me on all social media at AcuPro Academy. I hope you keep rocking it using TCM while enjoying your favorite cup of tea.

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