



# Guarana

**Guarana** is another gift from the Amazon rainforest that is quickly becoming popular in North America as a wonderful way to *improve mental sharpness, reduce fatigue, increase stamina and endurance*, and it may even lift depressed spirits. It is considered a favorite national diet drink in Brazil.

**Information:** Herbals/Nutritionals/Medicinals can be very strong. Consequently, if they are not tailored to your specific needs, they can do more harm than good. This information is meant to be used by your VHC Medical Team and personal Physician as they build your Total Health Plan. Never attempt to adjust your prescribed medications and/or Natural Treatments without your physician's and Medical Team's knowledge and guidance. Since herbals/nutritionals and medications can interact with each other, it is always advisable to consult with your health care provider and The Vibrant Health Community at [www.VibrantHealthCommunity.com](http://www.VibrantHealthCommunity.com) (or call 1-866-378-8253) before starting or changing your program.

**Botanical:** *Paullinia cupana*

**Family:** *Sapindaceae* (soapberry)

**Other common names:** Brazilian Cocoa, Paullinia, Uabano, Guarana Bread, Paullinia Sorbilis, Uaranzeiro, Brazilian Chocolate

**History:** Guarana is a shrubby, climbing vine that is native to South America, with compound leaves, yellow-flowered panicles, and pear-shaped fruit, filled with seeds like a small horse chestnut. Its botanical genus, *Paullinia*, is derived from the name, Paullini, a European medical botanist, who died in 1712, but it was actually thought to be discovered by the ancient Incas, who used it centuries before the Europeans set foot in the New World, as an energy and stamina booster. The Maues and Murdurow Indians have been known to travel through jungles and across mountains for miles at a steady pace with a stick of Guarana as their only food. Guarana is made by the Guaranis, a tribe of South American Indians, in a long and complicated process. The seeds are shelled, washed, roasted, and pounded into a fine powder that is mixed with water to make dough. It is then rolled and sun-dried (or over a slow fire) until it hardens and is cut into eight-inch cylindrical pieces. The result is a bitter, chocolate-flavored substance (without chocolate's oiliness) that is used in refreshing teas or as a tasty, coffee-like drink that is said to increase energy and mental acuity, combat fatigue and promote endurance and stamina. Supposedly, Guarana was used by Japanese soldiers during World War II for

maintaining stamina, alertness and courage and is also said to be the richest source of caffeine worldwide that is well-known for its stimulating effects, due to that high caffeine content. Brazilian miners drink it constantly, claiming that it prevents many diseases and is refreshing, and it is even considered a favorite national diet drink. Guarana is rapidly becoming popular in North America and is added to diet foods, supplements for athletes, tonic drinks, chewing gum, soft drinks, candy and liqueurs. Some of the constituents in Guarana include adenine, caffeine, D-catechin, saponin, tannins, theobromine, theophylline, starch and a fixed oil and a crystallizable principle in the seeds called guaranine.

**Beneficial Uses:** Guarana is a stimulating tonic that is believed to improve physical stamina and endurance. Because its guaranine content is almost identical to caffeine in its actions, athletes have been known to take it to stimulate and improve their performance and increase their strength and endurance. It is also thought to reduce fatigue and exhaustion. The combination of guaranine, theobromine and theophylline act to stimulate the

central nervous system and also act to enhance the metabolic rate, which may be helpful in weight loss programs.

As a "nervine," Guarana is also said to strengthen functional activity of the nervous system. The alkaloids, theobromine and theophylline, act to stimulate the central nervous system and are thought to be useful in cases of neuralgia, paralysis, migraine and nervous headache (particularly popular in the U.S. and Europe) and the distress that sometimes accompanies menstruation.

Guarana is considered a gentle excitant that is said to be good for depression and mental exertion where there is fatigue or even exhaustion from hot weather. It is also thought to increase mental sharpness and concentration, which may also be a result of its guaranine content.

The tannins in Guarana act as an astringent and are said to help ease mild forms of leukorrhoea (vaginal discharge) and diarrhea.

As a mild diuretic, Guarana is thought to promote urine flow and act as febrifuge that helps to reduce mild fevers. It is also said to alleviate urinary tract irritation.

**Contraindications:** Pregnant and nursing women and people with high blood pressure or cardiovascular disease should not use Guarana. It is not recommended in large amounts (many times the recommended dosage) because of its high guaranine/caffeine content, as it may cause sleeplessness and other possible health risks associated with caffeine. Do not take Guarana if you are taking the following medicines used for manic depression: lithium (Eskalith®, Lithane®, Lithotabs®) or mental illness (Clozapine).