

URUGUAY

MATE

THE DRINK OF URUGUAYANS



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HOW TO PREPARE A DRINK OF MATE:



Fill the mate gourd to approximately two-thirds of its capacity with “yerba” (dried leaves of *Ilex paraguariensis*).



Cover the gourd with one of your hands and tilt it to the side so that all the yerba goes to that side and an empty space is left from the bottom to the top of the gourd.



Pour warm water in the empty space you left until it reaches the rim and let it sit for some minutes so that the dried leaves of yerba can hydrate and swell.



Insert the metallic drinking straw called “bombilla” into the gourd, right in the center of the space you filled with water and cover the upper tip of the straw with your thumb while you do it.



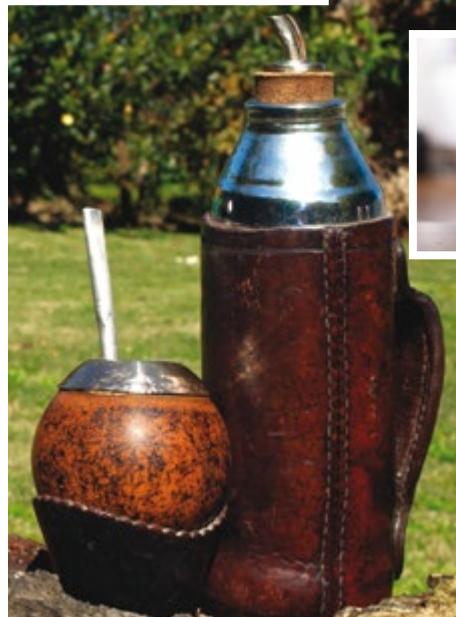
Finally, pour hot water (not boiling) to obtain the mate infusion drink and sip from the straw.

MATE drinking

Mate is the drink from the infusion of yerba mate leaves. "Yerba" is made of dried and ground leaves of the *Ilex paraguariensis* species.

The origin of this drink goes back to prehispanic times of the guarani culture. However, in the XVII century, while tea drinking was gaining more and more followers in Europe, in South America, and especially in Uruguay, mate drinking was spreading very fast.

At the beginning mate was an inseparable companion for country men. Under different names such as Cimarrón, amargo (bitter), verde (green), mate was a loyal friend for people on the fields and for both lonely and joyful times. As time went by, mate started to conquer the city and today mate drinking is a common practice in all the territory of Uruguay as well as in Argentina, Paraguay and the south of Brazil.



“It is quite hard to think of a Uruguayan who does not drink mate. It is part of the essential national culture. But, what is mate?”

ELEMENTS OF MATE

Yerba comes from the *Ilex paraguariensis* species or yerba mate tree, native to South America, and grows spontaneously in cultivated environments in mild or temperate areas of Paraguay, Brazil and Argentina.

Yerba has a significant content of caffeine.

When comparing the percentages of this alkaloid in tea and coffee, yerba mate is positioned in the middle. Likewise, yerba mate also contains substances of high

nutritional value such as vitamin

A. The specific composition of yerba mate, especially because of its caffeine content, makes its infusion a very stimulating and tonic drink. In the same way, it acts as a diuretic and vasodilator. Traditionally,

mate has been made from a dried calabash

gourd that, properly sectioned, is transformed into

the container. The word mate comes from a Quechua word that designates the container (calabash gourd), which later became the word to name the drink itself.

The mate gourd must be "cured" before using it as a container to drink the infusion. Containers of other materials such as ceramics, glass and more recently silicone are also used.

The tradition of mate drinking is so vivid today that there are always a myriad of innovations around the infusion. Such as for example, the so-called "Mate Go". An accessory which enables ready to drink

mates to be carried in a purse of backpack without any spill of yerba. The straw (bombilla), usually made of metal, is the accessory whose function is the absorption and filtration

of the infusion. It consists of a neck or tube with a filter at one end and a mouth nozzle at the other end. The bombilla, as we know it today, dates from the 18th century. The use of thermos bottles, instead of kettles, to pour

water into the mate gourd, was a Uruguayan initiative that enabled mate drinking to be taken outside people's homes. This is the reason why in Uruguay it is very common to drink mate in the most diverse public places and this habit has become one of the most typical images of Uruguay's citizen landscape.

