

Paste

Discover Coffee Fruit, Nature's Wasted Superfood

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Photo courtesy of KonaRed



Blueberries. Pomegranates. Oranges. Pineapples. All easy-to-buy fruits we know are good for us. But what if we told you one of nature's healthiest foods was something farmers typically used for compost—or even completely threw away as trash?

Coffee is one healthy vice. Along with keeping you from drooling all over your desk mid-day, it's low in calories, packed with antioxidants and may protect against ailments like Type 2 Diabetes, Parkinson's and liver disease. However, the thin and juicy coating on the outside of the coffee bean does this and more. A true superfood packed with antioxidants—due to the uber-concentrated polyphenols—coffee fruit has the power to boost the immune system, protect against free radicals and act as an anti-inflammatory.



Future-Ceuticals, creator of Coffeeberry and the patented process for preserving coffee fruit, have been researching the benefits of coffee fruit for over 13 years. Through analyzing how people's bodies responded to ingesting coffee fruit, they discovered it stimulates the production of Brain Derived Neurotropic Factor (BDNF), a protein essential for maintaining healthy cognition and a host of other brain-related processes such as sleep and mood. To benefit from coffee fruit's unique combination of phytonutrients, a person must ingest both the outer fruit and the bean—not just traditional coffee products like black coffee and green coffee bean extract.

In fact, according to Dr. Debbie Palmer, who uses coffee fruit in her Replere Skincare line, the fruit of the *Coffea arabica* plant is one of the world's most powerful antioxidants.

“Coffee fruit is hand-picked on coffee farms—as it has been done for over 1,000 years—and it is known by the farmers that the fruit is rejuvenating...and those who pick it have younger looking hands,” she explains. “This is because the fruit is high in polyphenol compounds: proanthocyanidins, chlorogenic acid, quinic acid, ferulic acid and caffeic acid. The fruit has been found to be higher in antioxidants than tea, vitamin C and E, raspberries, strawberries, blueberries and pomegranate.”

Because coffee cherry skins ruin the taste of coffee, farmers have always thrown them away, putting them back into the ground to fertilize the soil.

If only you had access to acres worth of coffee plants—or at least a few products to help you savor the skins. Enter Coffeeberry, who've created a line of powders and concentrates that use both the fruit and the bean. Their products aren't just use for drinks by consumers, but also infused into energy drinks, tonics, instant coffees, enhanced waters and meal replacements by other businesses. For them, it's not just about the drink itself, it's about telling the whole coffee story of delivering a healthy, non-roasted “coffee as nature originally intended”: as a fruit.

“There is a real opportunity to add back to coffee a marvelous, healthy nutritional fruit that had

traditionally been discarded as a waste material,” says Andrew Wheeler, Director of Marketing for Future-Ceuticals. “There is a sustainability and ‘green’ aspect of this story that strikes a chord with those of us seeking healthy, all natural super foods. It is enlivened by the story of our discovery and use of a beautiful red fruit hiding in plain sight for hundreds of years.”



There’s also KonaRed , a Kona, Hawaii company crafting coffee cherry juices and drink powders using Kona’s famous coffee cherries, even paying local farmers for their waste. To create the beverage, they take the ripe red fruit after the coffee beans—or seeds of the cherries—are removed, then dry it and process it using Coffeeberry’s patented extraction processes, before mixing that liquid with other natural ingredients.

While some people have dubbed KonaRed beverages as energy drinks, they’re nothing like the sugary taurine-spiked beverages you find at gas stations. Here, it’s simply the coffee cherry’s antioxidants improving cognitive function and mental clarity.

Oh, and if you’re looking for a buzz with your health boost, the company recommends mixing KonaRed in cocktails like lemon drops and cosmopolitans.

And if you’d rather eat your coffee, there’s always CoffeeFlour —not coffee beans, but coffee fruit. Founder Dan Belliveau, once the Director of Technical Services at Starbucks, became tired of seeing waste in coffee production, setting out to create something delicious, sustainable and also healthy. According to the company, their flour packs five times more fiber than whole grain bread, three times more protein per gram than kale, three times more iron than spinach and twice the potassium of bananas. That’s not to say eating 20 cookies made from CoffeeFlour won’t make those jeans a bit tighter, but it is nice to know you get an antioxidant boost from including it in your baked goods.

CoffeeFlour isn’t supposed to replace regular flour; it’s to be used in combination with it—as well as cocoa powder (which CoffeeFlour resembles visually), fruit powders and other gluten-free flours—as it enhances the products it’s blended with to increase nutrients and add a more

pronounced flavor profile. CoffeeFlour does not taste like brewed coffee, but has more nuanced notes of citrus and roasted fruit.

The most natural way to intake these coffee cherries, of course, is straight from the bush. And since that's not an option for those of us who don't live in, say, Hawaii, innovative companies have utilized this previously composted resource and fashioned options for consumers to creatively incorporate coffee fruit—as well as its health benefits—in everyday foods. It may even give you a new appreciation for the plant that brings you your morning joe.

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