

Miyama Herbal Tea

A wide variety of wild herbs and other edible plants and flowers grow in the valleys and forests of Miyama. Local people have foraged these plants for generations, using them in food and drink. One such beverage is Miyama herbal tea, blended and brewed by a group of residents and served to visitors at the Miyama Folklore Museum.

Herbs traditionally used in the area include horsetail grass, which has diuretic properties; persimmon leaves, known to aid digestion; and mulberry leaves, which are rich in minerals and are said to be good for the liver. In Miyama herbal tea, horsetail grass and persimmon leaves are mixed with tea leaves, *obako* (*Plantago asiatica*) leaves, ruscus bamboo, mugwort, and *dokudami* (*Houttuynia cordata*), a herb with white flowers that spreads quickly and is considered a nuisance by gardeners but has long been cherished for its purported healing properties.

To make the tea, the herbs are dried in the sun, crushed, roasted in an iron pot, and then steeped in hot or cold water. Bags of dried, roasted tea herbs can be purchased at the souvenir shop by the entrance to the Kayabuki no Sato village of thatched-roof houses and in the Miyama Folklore Museum.