

Dip, dip, sip...but it's not tea

Q&A | *Infusions — almost like flavoured tea, but with a big difference — are catching on worldwide. Anoothi Vishal does a sampling with Typhoo's Arup Ratan Pal*

What are "infusions"? And how are they different from flavoured tea?

These are a mix of fruit extract, spices and herbs on a neutral base. And these can be brewed in hot water like tea (the product is being sold in a dip bag format). The flavours could be endless, for instance, in India, we have black currant, orange and lemon, but you can also have cranberries and chamomile and so forth that are available abroad. What you are getting is more of the fruity flavor and extract without it

being mixed with tea.

Why should a tea company be getting into this category then?

It is a value-addition, an extension of our product profile. Consumers, especially younger ones, want something new all the time. This offers them just that. In India, with most of the population below 40, we hope that infusions will really catch on.

It is almost like having warm flavoured water—or sherbet in

hot water... Is this the correct way to appreciate these?

I feel that infusions are like wine. A large part of the experience is also in taking in the aroma and the smell. Because when you brew it that's the first thing that hits you. We've noticed that whenever we brew this in office or in a new place, people start turning up with the smell and asking, "What is it that you are having?" Drinking it is almost like a formality in the end.

And you say there are health benefits too...

Yes. Like tea, this is full of antioxidants and anti-ageing properties because what you are getting is the benefit of fruits and herbs. The black currant flavour, for instance, contains fruit extract and leaves on a neutral apple pomace base. And unlike tea, this does not contain any caffeine. With the world moving to everything green, this is a popular category abroad.

How are you marketing it here?

By doing as many tastings as we can! Because no matter how much I explain to people what this is, they have to experience it. We are also displaying and stocking it at our Cha Bars so that people can get interested. ■

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