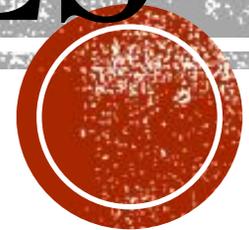


**A PLANT STORY: ALL
ABOUT TURKEY'S
HERBAL REMEDIES**

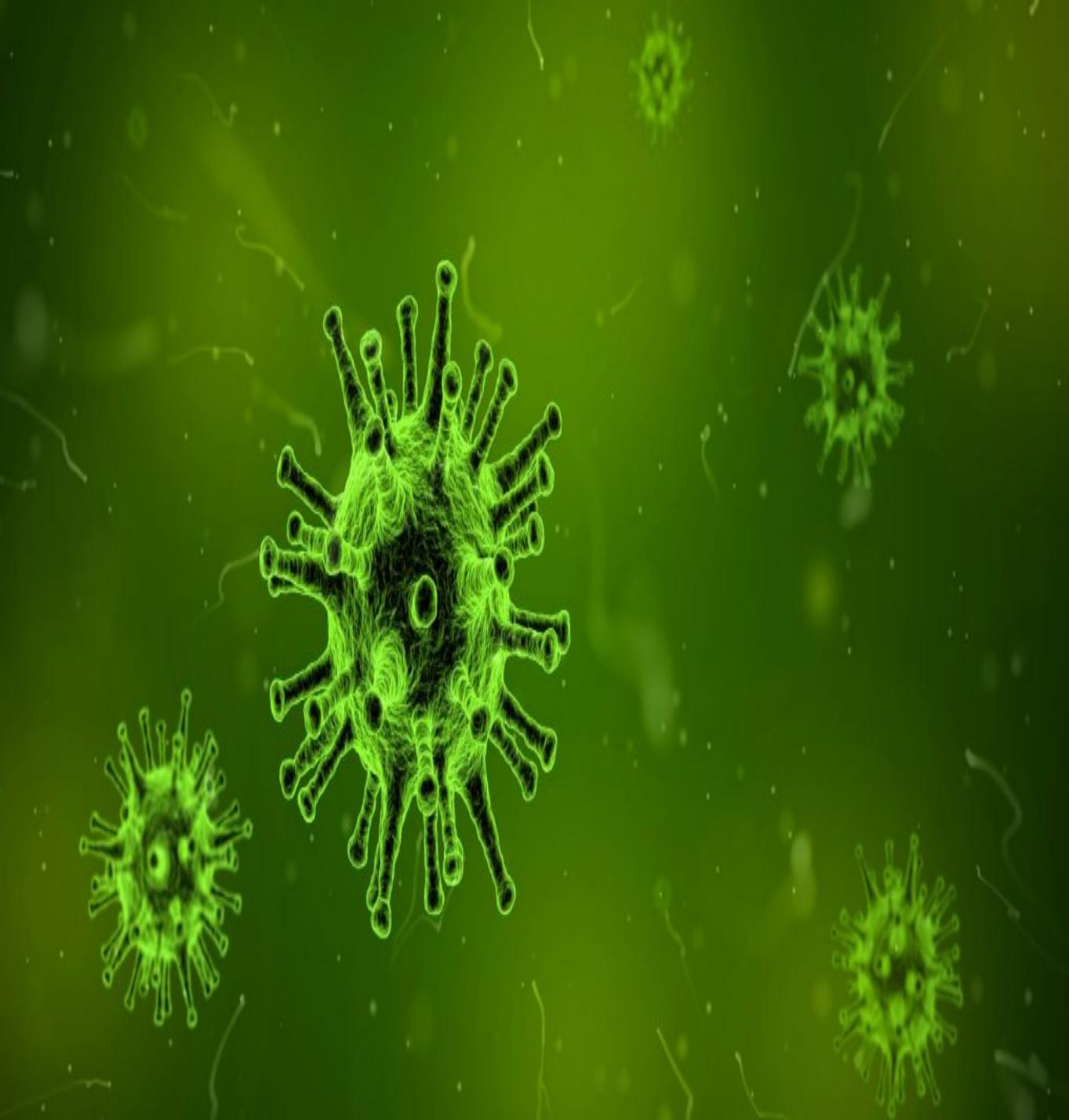




Stomach Problems

If you have a sensitive stomach, you've likely heard plenty of times that you shouldn't be drinking coffee. In Turkey, there is an exception to that – Turkish coffee! It is a common belief that a cup of Turkish coffee with no sugar is a great remedy for an upset stomach. What is even more surprising is that it actually does work. The original version of Turkish coffee remedy, but a less conventional one, is *kahve-limon*. Simply pour 4-5 drops of freshly-squeezed lemon juice over a dessert spoon of Turkish coffee. This mixture, eaten twice a day, is believed to help with diarrhea.





Hangover

Drinking water with lemon juice and a pinch of salt is a popular hangover remedy. It is also commonly used in Turkey. For those feeling that it isn't Turkish enough, I recommend drinking *ayran* (or ayran with soda). An impeccable method!





Cold&Flu

One of my favorite herbal teas for cold, that is also widely accessible and popular, is linden tea (*ihlamur çayı*). I will risk saying that you can find it in all markets, dried or in the form of teabags. Traditionally served with cinnamon – perfect for rainy, depressing autumn evenings. You may opt for rosehip tea (*kuşburnu çayı*), which is full of Vitamin C. For fighting the flu, a common medicine is a honey-lemon-ginger syrup (*bal, limon, zencefil kürü*). The recipe is simple but requires some preparation and waiting time. Peel and finely chop a medium-sized ginger and place it at the bottom of a small jar. Add one sliced lemon, fill the jar with honey. You can also add cinnamon for taste. Put the jar in a dark spot for 24 hours. The next day, the mixture is ready and you can use it either by itself or add it to your tea. It lasts up to 2 months in the fridge.





Getting Pregnant

Turks believe that to get pregnant, women should be consuming, wait for it, figs. For someone coming from a cold climate where figs aren't common, this surprised me. It gets even more surprising – Turkish doctors recommend this method as well! Ladies, write down the recipe: pour 500 ml of water in a pot, add 8-9 dried figs and cook for 7-8 minutes. If you are using fresh figs, cooking time should be 3-4 minutes. The mixture should be had two times a day – 1 hour before breakfast and 1 hour before the last meal of the day. Continue sipping this concoction for 21 days and you will soon find yourself shopping. Honorable mention for the stuff you shouldn't consume when trying to conceive: mint, parsley, and sage.





Children's Health and Proper Development

I came across this one while reading children's books in Turkish as part of my language learning attempts. At breakfast, children consume one or two spoons of *pekmez* for its energy boosting properties. Pekmez is a molasses syrup most often made from grapes. It contains vitamins as well as iron, potassium, magnesium, and calcium. These are crucial elements for proper child development. Adults can enjoy and benefit from this flavor too.





Harnup or keçiboynuzu

The carob bean, which in Turkish is referred to as harnup or keçiboynuzu, the latter which means “goat’s horns,” is a flowering tree in the legume family that is most commonly used to make locust bean gum, which serves as a thickening agent in commercial food production.

The sweet-tasting and extremely nutritious carob pods are also regularly used as a chocolate substitute, especially in healthy foods such as snack bars. The tasty pods themselves can be eaten as is, but in Turkey it is common practice to grind them down into a powder, which in rural areas is something any local grain mill will do. The resulting “harnup tozu” or carob powder, can then be consumed hot with water or milk as a nutritious hot chocolate substitute.

In Turkey, they also make a “harnup pekmezi,” which is carob molasses that is incorporated in foods or can be consumed by the spoonful each morning.





Hünnap

Not to be confused with harnup, (which is carob), “hünnap,” is known as jujube in English or is often referred to as Chinese date. Jujube is a shrub that produces small oval fruits that taste somewhere between a dry pear and a bitter apple. While as a fruit, they may leave much to be desired, the plant’s history is much more impressive.

Believed to have originated in China, jujube was used to produce China’s first books, made from woodblock printing. The fruit and its seeds are regularly used in Eastern medicine and in Turkey, where the fruit is revered for its health benefits and it can be a treasure occasionally found in farmers markets both as a fresh and dried fruit.





Enginar yaprađı

Even more bitter than the bitter melon, is a tea made from the outer [artichoke leaves](#); however, the health benefits of this brew make it worth it. Hands down the best tea for both liver cleansing and weight loss is referred to in Turkish as enginar yaprađı ayı. Not only does it work to burn fat, but it also cleans the intestines, which decreases water retention. The antioxidant cynarine, which is found in these leaves, is what assists the liver to release toxins, while it also strengthens the bones, increases concentration and treats urinary tract infections. The dried leaves can be found in Turkey's aktar spice shops, but be forewarned, it may truly be the most bitter tea you will ever taste.





Sinameki out

Called cassia in English, sinameki is a flowering plant in the legume family whose leaves are brewed in a curative tea here in Turkey. Sinameki leaves are said to assist in removing parasites, cure constipation and chronic inflammation.

