

# Strandzha herbal tea received Protected Designation of Origin

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On 3 June 2025, the European Commission officially entered “Strandzha Herbal Tea” in the Register of Geographical Indications of the European Union (EU). This was done through the publication of an Implementing Regulation in the Official Journal of the EU, by which the name obtained the status of Protected Designation of Origin (PDO). The registration initiative was launched by the group of producers “DAR-3 SS – DZZD”, who submitted an application to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food in April 2021.

**“Strandzha Herbal Tea” – a priceless herb**

Strandzha tea is an endemic species – a species that in Bulgaria occurs only in Strandzha, in Southeastern Bulgaria. Its cultivation is entirely manual and follows traditional practices adapted to the unique calcareous soils in the region.

The herbal tea is produced from leaves and flowers of a plant of the genus *Sideritis* (family *Lamiaceae*). Cultivation must be carried out only on areas with suitable exposure and soil type (alkaline soils, which may also be around limestone rocks), as close as possible to the floristic characteristics of the native habitats of plants of the genus *Sideritis*. Such areas are found in the territory of the five municipalities in Strandzha: Malko Tarnovo, Primorsko, Sozopol, Sredets and Tsarevo. The product is distinguished by a characteristic slightly sweet taste, a delicate aromatic bouquet and a high content of antioxidants and phenolic compounds. The harvest is collected from June to August.

The tea is used not only as a beverage, but also as a natural remedy with proven antibacterial and antiviral properties. The tea has a characteristic aroma combining mint, linden blossom and notes of dried fruits, and it has high antioxidant activity.

For general strengthening of the body, you need one or two finely broken herbal stems, poured over with 500 ml of boiling water. It is left to simmer over low heat for 5 minutes. If desired, it can be consumed hot or cold with added lemon juice or a teaspoon of honey.

## **Protected Designation of Origin (PDO)**

Thus, this tea, unique for Bulgaria, becomes part of the European register of protected agricultural products. PDOs protect the names of certain products in order to promote their specific characteristics, linked to their geographical origin and the traditional know-how used in their production. Thanks to the recognition of geographical indications, consumers can have confidence that certain products are of high quality, and producers can market their output more successfully.

Registration under the European quality schemes contributes to the preservation of Bulgarian culinary and cultural heritage, the protection of the environment and biodiversity, the sustainable development of rural areas and the increase of the market value and recognition of the product through the European logo.

With the inclusion of “Strandzha Herbal Tea” in the register, Bulgaria now has six protected foods in the EU – three Protected Designations of Origin – “Strandzha Manov Honey”, “Bulgarian Yoghurt”, “Bulgarian White

Brined Cheese”), two Protected Geographical Indications – “Gornooryahovski Sudzhuk”, “Bulgarian Rose Oil” and seven products with a Traditional Speciality Guaranteed.