Reishi Mushroom Tea Recipe

The practice of drinking reishi mushroom tea has existed for years, and it's still one of the best ways to reap the benefits of this medicinal mushroom.

The reishi mushroom (*Ganoderma lucidum* and other species) is a polypore that is cultivated on logs or woodchip beds. Although softer when fresh, it becomes quite hard when dried. This is due to the presence of chitin, a carbohydrate that helps makes up the cell walls of fungi.

How does this affect your mushroom tea? It means that dried reishi is tough, with some of the medicinal molecules locked up in the indigestible chitin. So we're going to need a long hot water extract to get these molecules out, far longer than you would brew a traditional tea.

The benefits of this tea come from water-soluble polysaccharides known as beta-glucans. These molecules are thought to:

* Stimulate the immune system to fight infection and foreign cells
* Inhibit tumor growth
* Lower blood pressure
* Stabilize blood sugar

For this recipe I recommend buying your dried reishi mushrooms from [Mountain Rose Herbs!](http://www.mountainroseherbs.com/index.php?AID=107484) Read my review of the company [here](http://www.mushroom-appreciation.com/mountain-rose-herbs.html).

**Ingredients**

* Dried reishi mushrooms
* Water

Pretty simple. The amounts are up to you. A standard reishi recommendation is 3 - 5 grams a day, although doses up to 15 grams are not uncommon for more serious illnesses.

If you don't have a scale, know that 3 grams is about 1 heaping tablespoon of broken or ground reishi pieces.

The amount of water is your choice as well. It all depends on how many cups of tea you want to drink. I use about 4 - 5 cups of water for every 3 - 5 grams of reishi (you can see how exact I am about this). This will boil down to a fraction of the original amount.

**Preparation**

Smaller pieces are better for a hot water extraction. That said, have you ever tried to pulverize *Ganoderma lucidum*? I once broke a coffee grinder blade trying to break one apart!

Use whatever you have to break them into pieces. If you have an appliance that will grind them, that's great. Otherwise you can try to cut with a heavy blade or break apart pieces with your hands. If this is all too much work you can still use a whole dried mushroom per pot of water.

An easy solution is to buy a pre-sliced bag of dried reishi. This will save you the trouble of having to break them apart.

**Instructions**

Bring the water to a boil in a stainless steel or ceramic pot. Don't use aluminum for such a prolonged boiling process.

Add the mushroom pieces. Reduce the heat until the mixture is simmering, not outright boiling. Let it simmer for 2 hours.

Remove from the heat, strain, and set aside. Allow the liquid to cool a little, as it's quite hot. You can repeat the process with the strained pieces until the resulting extraction is no longer bitter or colored.

**But it tastes nasty....**

What!? You don't like it?

Okay, so it is an *acquired* taste. There are other things you can add to your mushroom tea that may help:

* A sweetener such as honey. Don't add too much refined sugar or you defeat the purpose of creating a healthy drink.
* Ginger
* Juice
* Green tea

**Final notes**

There are a few more things you should know about reishi mushroom tea:

* Stomach upset and allergic reactions are rare but they can happen. Only try a small amount of tea your first time to make sure it agrees with you.
* Do not take if you're on blood-thinning medications as this tea may increase bleeding time.
* Your tea will keep for a few days in the refrigerator, so feel free to make a few batches at a time and store them.
* Reishi mushrooms also have an anti-inflammatory effect. However, those benefits come from an alcohol extraction, not water. To reduce inflammation, it's better to [make an alcoholic Ganoderma extract](http://www.mushroom-appreciation.com/ganoderma-extract.html) than a tea.
* For more information on the health benefits of reishi along with documentation of many clinical studies, I'd recommend reading *Reishi Mushroom: Herb of Spiritual Potency and Medicinal Wonder* by Terry Willard.
* *Ganoderma lucidum* is one of the best studied and best used substances in herbal medicine. Yet there is a lot of hype around reishi. Use this recipe with some quality organic mushrooms from a good supplier. You don't need to spend a small fortune!

Note that this mushroom tea recipe also works for other tough medicinal mushrooms such as the true tinder polypore (*Fomitopsis officinalis*) and the artist's conk (*Ganoderma applanatum*).