

off-topic, mate

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 08 Jan 1999

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Dan Parmenter — 08 Jan 1999, 14:41

Well after reading about it for so long in Wolfe and Borges and being generally interested in the positive effects of consumable plants and flowers, I decided I had to find what mate was all about.

Fortunately, I work with two women from Argentina, one of whom returned from Argentina with the cup, also called a mate, and the special metal straw/strainer, called the bombilla. The drink is made by filling the mate cup (a small gourd, dried, carved and decorated) with yerba mate the "tea leaves", usually called just yerba and adding warm, not boiling water. It is sipped through the bombilla, a stainless-steel straw with a strainer on the end.

It tastes rather bitter and was described as something of an acquired taste, but I could see getting used to it. It is as popular as coffee or tea is here in countries like Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and Brazil.

Wolfe's characters in URTH and LONG SUN seem to drink a lot of it, though I don't recall specific mention of the gourd or bombilla.

So now I know.

Dan

p.s. If any of you happen to be going to Boston's ARISIA SF con (which starts today), say hello. I'll be there.