Consumers’ sensory perception and acceptability of Hibiscus drinks: a cross-cultural study in Europe


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• Hibiscus var. sabdariffa drinks are rich in nutrients and their consumption is widespread in Africa and Asia, but they still are quite unknown among European consumers.

• The sensory quality and acceptability of a hibiscus infusion, prepared freshly from dried calyces according to Senegalese tradition, and two new hibiscus drinks developed by the African Food Tradition Revisited by Research (AFTER) project – an ultra-vacuum concentrate (UVc) and an improved syrup (REs) – were evaluated by comparable consumer samples in France (n=133), Portugal (n=133) and United Kingdom (n=124), between March and July 2014.

• Similar sensory characterizations and preference profiles were obtained across countries, although French participants were generally the most appreciative of hibiscus drinks.

• The most frequently selected CATA descriptors were fruity and red fruits, strongly suggesting that participants misidentified the drink as a red fruits beverage. Oppositely, tisane and new were among the less frequently chosen terms, suggesting consumers in general did not recognize the drink as an extract of an unknown plant.