

Sometimes, when walking through different cities around the world, or when we are in squares, parks or tourist spots, we see some people holding in their hand a cylindrical container, called a thermos flask, and in the other hand a strange container, that can be of different shapes, with a kind of straw. This is known in Argentina as Mate. Mate is not only known in Argentina, but is also known in other South American countries, such as Uruguay, Paraguay, southern Brazil, and some parts of Bolivia.

The Infusion, known as 'mate,' is made with the crushed leaves of the yerba mate (*Ilex Paraguayensis*). Traditional mate is drunk with hot water and a straw that is called a 'bombilla', in Spanish. The bombilla (straw) has to be inserted inside the small container called “mate”, “cuia”, “porongo” or “guampa” [1], as is defined below.

To prepare mate there are specific steps to follow. First, heat water until the temperature reaches 75°C or 80 °C. Put the hot water in a container able to maintain heat for a long time, such as a thermos flask. Next, take the crushed leaves of the yerba-mate from the container for mate (mate, cuia, porongo or guampa) and fill the mate $\frac{3}{4}$ full. Afterwards, pour hot water into the mate and finally, insert the bombilla [2].

There are different ways to drink mate. It may be drunk with some sugar, because the flavour of mate is quite bitter. In some northern regions of Argentina, (the) mate is drunk with natural juice, such as orange or lemon juice, instead of hot water. [2].

Finally, people drink mate not only as a pastime or for fun, but also as a way to share pleasant moments with friends or relatives, or even to start a conversation with people that you do not know.

Reference:

[1] <http://web.archive.org/web/20131207014508/http://muyargentino.com/el-mate-argentina/>

[2] <http://yerbamateargentina.org.ar>