

# APHRODISIACS PART I

September 25, 2012 by [Dr. Liesa](#)

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## Aphrodisiac

An aphrodisiac is a substance that increases or stimulates sexual desire. The name derives from *Aphrodite*, who was the Greek goddess of love, beauty and of sexuality. Greek legends say Aphrodite sprang from the sea foam—and the severed genitalia of Uranus, father of the Titan Gods. The Romans equivalent goddess was Venus.

The search for aphrodisiacs and sexual enhancements goes back thousands of years. Indian, Egyptian, Roman, and Greek cultures all have long historical records of using sexual enhancing substances.

Aphrodisiacs were not only valued for their ability to enhance the sexual experience, but also in assisting human procreation. Moreover, when they actually worked, they improved the quality of life allowing for sexually fulfilling relationships.

These days the boundaries tend to merge between aphrodisiacs (desire and libido enhancers) versus performance /potency healer-enhancers such as Viagra, Levitra and Cialis and a host of obscure traditional remedies. For simplicity's sake, we'll refer to both performance and desire enhancers as aphrodisiacs.

## **History:**

Throughout the ages, various natural substances have been reputed to hold aphrodisiac powers. These were sometimes used to the detriment of the user's health. Throughout history, countless animals have died to bring sexual pleasure to humans.

Sadly, some species such as the Tibetan red deer, whose velvety spring antlers are rumored to be excellent aphrodisiacs, have been hunted nearly to extinction.

They are not alone. Sperm Whales, tigers, rhinoceroses, turtles, sharks, some bears, blowfish, seals, bulls, tortoises, seahorses and crocodiles (to name a few), have been hunted nearly to extinction for their reputed sexual stimulant powers or to help human males to overcome impotence and to enhance the sexual experience for both sexes.

Plants & plant parts such as ginseng, ginko biloba, yohimbe and countless others have been used for thousands of years, but with less drastic results to the ecosystem.

Even mineral substances such as arsenic, rock salt and others have been sought and used for sexual enhancement. There has even been a recent resurgence in the mysterious **shilajit mumijo\***. It's still uncertain whether this substance fits under mineral or biological category.

But of all the reputed and legendary substances, animal, vegetable and / or mineral, which really do act as true, safe aphrodisiacs and which are dangerous?

First, we will explore some of the reasons aphrodisiacs may succeed in stimulating sexuality.

- 1) Visually mimics genitalia, thereby creating a psychological belief in strengthening sexual effects or so-called Placebo Effect
- 2) Provides bodily minerals or nutrients that might otherwise be missing
- 3) Chemically stimulates or provides oxygen to the genital areas
- 4) Contains some hormones that may enhance the sexual experience

## **THE DOCTRINE OF SIGNATURES:**

In ancient Greece, Doctors Pedanius Dioscorides and Galen both promoted versions of the "doctrine of signatures," which held that plants resembling various organs and features of the body made effective remedies for those parts of the body.

Paracelsus(1491–1541) picked up the concept from ancient texts and helped re-popularized the concept that the God designed the form of all natural objects to indicate the object’s purpose.

For example, according to the Doctrine of Signatures, walnuts should be healing to the brain because of their resemblance to brains. (Modern science indicates they are actually good for the brain because of high Omega-3 levels).

However where the Greeks saw walnuts as brains, the naughty Romans saw only testicles. In fact they consecrated the walnut tree to Jupiter, the king of the Roman gods, and called the nuts “glands of Jupiter” (condensed to *juglans*). This gave rise to the walnut’s later scientific name, *Juglans regia*, literally Jupiter’s royal nuts. And they considered walnuts an aphrodisiac. That notion continued or was revived over subsequent millennia.

The Doctrine of Signatures holds sway in a number of substances reputed to be aphrodisiacs. This phenomenon is sometimes also termed as *sympathetic magic*.

Our list of Doctrine of Signatures type items has been expanded to include aphrodisiacs consisting of parts of fierce animals thought to make the consumer fierce. Most of these are geared toward alleged enhancement of male sexual performance.

**The following items either have a genital-like appearance or belong to an animal that displays aggressive and or sexually promiscuous behavior.**

**Bat and Ball Soup:** Bat and ball soup is composed of the genitals of a male bull and is believed in Filipino cultures to be an aphrodisiac. The Greeks ate animal testicles before competing in games.

Some experts say that eating animal testicles for sexual prowess is about as effective as eating cow brains for intelligence-i.e. not very. Others indicate that it may have some mild effect, but certainly any effects would not likely exceed the effects of modern testosterone treatments.

**Cobra & Other Venomous Snakes: The snake form is rather obviously phallic putting this one in the DOS class.** The tradition of consuming Cobra snakes as an aphrodisiac is a Cantonese tradition dating back to the Han dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 220). Cobras are poisonous and very risky to capture. But while the venom is deadly when injected into the bloodstream, the Cantonese take it orally apparently sans repercussions.

Even today a snake’s blood and bile is considered a male aphrodisiac among Asian men of all ages. Snake wine soaks the snake with venom and fluid in drinkable alcohol. In Asia it’s seen as a restorative and aid to the male libido. Men headed out for a night on the town will drink this concoction before going out in search of amorous action. A small glass of straight blood or snake blood/bile and alcohol is served to men

and is reminiscent of shots at the local bar here in the US. There are no studies as to the effectiveness of snake blood or bile on sexuality—so the jury is out on this one.

**Dog/Wolf Meat:** Dog meat is considered an aphrodisiac in the Philippines and some Asian countries. This is likely due to the fierce character of dogs and their ease at reproductive sport. There are no studies indicating a real relationship with dog meat and improved libido or sexual enhancement.

**Geoduck Clams (AKA “Mirugai”):** These clams have a long neck that can extend for three feet. Geoduck clams grow to about 3 feet and over frequently weigh around 7 pounds and can live well over 100years.

Aside from a strong resemblance to the human penis (only larger) there’s little evidence that they provide any aphrodisiac action. Nevertheless, Indian tribes in the Pacific Northwest have made fortunes selling Geoduck, to markets in Hong Kong and southern China where diners will pay up to \$100 for a dish of Geoduck meat.

**Oysters:** Instead of mimicking the male reproductive organs, oysters more resemble the female labia. For centuries, wives tales invested oysters with the power of increasing libido. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Cassanova breakfasted on 50 raw oysters per day. Before that, the Romans practiced eating raw oysters for improved sexual performance for both men and women.

There appears to be some veracity to the claim of increased libido for both sexes. In 2005 a team of Italian and American researchers analyzed bivalve mollusks (oysters belong to this group) and found they contained abundant amino acids and some unusual ones such as D-aspartic acid (D-Asp) and N-methyl-D-aspartate (NMDA) that particularly trigger the increase in hormones.

Cooking can destroy these vital amino acids so in order to gain the benefits, oysters need to be eaten raw. This carries a risk for certain diseases and should be purchased fresh from a reputable merchant.

**Penis of Bull, Deer, Ox, Rhinoceros Tiger or Turtle:** Sadly, some of these are still used as aphrodisiacs. This has tragically contributed to the diminishing population and even endangered some species such as the Rhinoceros, tigers, turtles, Tibetan Deer and many others.

In Ancient Greece Hippocrates recommended consuming deer penis to resolve sexual difficulties. Even now the Chinese commonly use deer penis wine as a remedy for athletic injuries as well as to enhance male sexual prowess. Thus far, there is little evidence that such animal genitalia do much in regard to sexual performance—other than act as a placebo.

**Rhinoceros Horn:** The appearance of the rhinoceros horn can be likened to an erect penis—thus easily falling under the Doctrine of Signatures. However, there may be some validity to the claim to the horn’s aphrodisiac qualities.

While it is mainly composed of keratin (the same substance in our finger and toenails) other ingredients include; ethanolamine, phosphorous, and sugar, along with the free amino acids threonine, aspartic acid, lysine, histidine, ornithine, and L-arginine—an amino acid.

L-Arginine –is a precursor of nitric oxide (NO) which is an essential compound that helps blood circulation. Assuming that any erectile dysfunction in men and sexual disinterest in women are both caused by lack of blood flow, L-Arginine can be an assist in normalizing sexual function. Also aspartic acid has a role in assisting with the release of hormones in human.

The reputation of Rhinoceros horn for increasing libido has nearly led to the extinction of this animal. The killing of rhinoceroses is illegal in most countries where they are native. But poaching encouraged by high prices means these animals will continue to be endangered as long as a market exists.

The recent (2012) resurgence in poaching and rhinoceros horn theft appears to be fueled by a new rumor that the horn can cure cancer.

Currently, a single horn can fetch 200,000 Euros (\$250,000) on the black market. Tragically, fewer than 30,000 rhinoceroses exist today. The Javan Rhino is under particular threat of extinction with a remaining population of fewer than 50 animals.

**Walnuts:** While the Greeks called walnuts *karyon*, or “head,” because the kernel bears a resemblance to the brain The Romans thought walnuts looked more like testicles: They consecrated the walnut tree to Jupiter, the king of the Roman gods, and called the nuts “glands of Jupiter” (condensed to juglans hence the later scientific name, *Juglans regia* or Jupiter’s Royal Nuts.

Walnuts provide high energy to the human body and are a source of L-Arginine – which we discussed under rhinos—as a precursor to nitric oxide (NO) an essential compound that helps blood circulation important to normal sexual function in both men and women.

- *Shilajit mumijo Tar like substance that oozes from rocks in the Caucasus Mountains, Altai Mountains of Central Asia and the Tibet Mountains This pitch or tar is reported to contain reported to contain at least 85 minerals in ionic form, as well as triterpenes, humic acid and fulvic acid. It’s unknown if the origin of the substance is squirrel excrement or a type of mineral tar.*
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**END PART I—in Part II we'll explore dangerous aphrodisiacs to avoid:**

**We'd like to hear your stories about any aphrodisiacs you may have tried and your experience good, bad or none at all. Please feel free to comment.**

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