



Where traditional herbalism meets the modern world.

Making Herbal Remedies

Making Teas

Standard Infusions: Used for flowers, leaves and soft berries and seeds.

1. Serving size: For a therapeutic tea (medicinal) use 2 tsp (10ml) dried herbs or 2 tbsp (30ml) fresh herbs. For a standard pleasure herb tea use 1 tsp (5ml) dried herbs or 3 tsp (15ml) fresh herbs to 1-cup water.
2. Place this in a cup or teapot and add 1 cup of boiling water per serving and cover
3. Steep 5-10min. for a pleasure tea, 10-15min. for a medicinal tea.
4. Strain. Add honey to sweeten if desired.
5. Refrigerated, if not all used, and store no longer than 24hrs. Reheat in a pot, not a microwave.
6. For medicinal results 3-4 cups should be consumed daily.

Standard Decoctions: Used for bark, roots and harder berries and seeds.

1. Using the herbal quantities described above, add herbs and **cold** water to a non-aluminum pot. Cold water is used to help draw out the constituents from the plant. Hot water tends to seal them in barks and harder tissues (particularly alkaloids)
2. Bring water to a boil and then simmer for 20 min. covered.
3. Strain. Add honey if desired.
4. Refrigerate unused portion for no more than 24hr. Reheat in a pot, not the microwave.
5. For medicinal results drink 3-4 cups daily.

If a formula has both leaves and roots you can:

1. Decoct roots as usual adding leaves for last 5 minutes OR
2. Boil herbs for 2 minutes (partially covered) then remove from heat, fully cover and steep for 20 – 30 minutes.

Infused Oil

An infused oil is an oil which has had plant material added to extract the healing qualities from it. Infused oils are used in salves, creams, and for making massage oils.

Using fresh plant material: Fill a clear glass jar with freshly picked herbs and cover with oil (light oils such as olive oil, sweet almond oil, grape seed oil, apricot kernel oil, or jojoba oil work best). It is best if you can chop herbs into smaller pieces before placing them in



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the jar as this permits greater oil/herb surface contact. Make sure you completely cover the plant material with the oil (about 2 inches above the plants). Insert a knife along the inside of the jar moving slowly around the sides of the jar to release any trapped air. Cover mouth of the jar with 2 to 3 layers of cheesecloth or a paper towel and secure with an elastic band or a ring from sealer lids. Label and place in a sunny location for 3 to 4 weeks. Gently strain oil into a bowl or measuring cup, being careful not to squeeze plant material or to pour any water that has settled to the bottom of the jar into the final oil blend. Discard plant material. Let oil sit covered with paper towel or cheesecloth for an hour or so, to allow any water to settle to bottom. Pour oil into a dark jar, being careful not to pour any of the sediment or water from the bottom of the oil into the jar. Add the contents of two 800 IU Vitamin E capsule to the oil to prevent spoilage (you should add this amount for every 2 cups of oil). Label and store in a cool dark place. Most oils will last one year. Do not use if they develop a rancid smell.

Note: plants with higher water content should be air-dried overnight before infusing, as water can make the oil go rancid. Examples include comfrey leaf, plantain, chickweed and borage leaf

Using dry plant material: There are several methods for extracting an herb's healing qualities into oil. One is to heat the oil and plant mixture over a low temperature for several hours. This can be done in a crock-pot or in a heatproof container in an oven at the lowest possible setting. The herbs are covered by oil and then another 1 to 2 inches of oil is added above the herbs. The mixture should be heated for 6 to 8 hours. Cool, strain, and process, as above for fresh plant. The crock-pot and oven method are widely recommended but can be problematic given the variations in temperature from one crock pot/oven to another. Caution must be used to keep the oil from getting too hot and burning the herbs. The ideal temperature for the oil is approximately 100F / 38C degrees. Using a yogurt maker in the same way is also excellent and seems to keep the oil from overheating and potentially burning the herbs. You can also make infused oils by using the electric blender. Use 1 part plant material in a blender container with about 7 parts oil. This method works best if you add half the oil to the blender then the herb and follow with the remaining amount of oil. Stop/start the blender, scraping sides until oil and herbs are blending freely. Once this occurs let herb and oil blend on medium high speed until sides of the container are warm to the touch (5 to 7 minutes). Cool, strain, and process, as above for fresh plant.

Salves

60 ml (2 oz.) Infused calendula oil (see page 36 of the Healing Herbal for how to make)
10g (about 1½ Tbsp.) grated beeswax
Essential oil (optional)

Heat oil and wax over hot water bath until wax melts, stirring constantly. Remove from heat and add essential oil. Pour into clean salve jars and cool completely before putting lid on.



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Examples of medicinal salves include:

For infections or anti-microbial action - try echinacea, burdock, golden seal, Oregon grape root, or thyme.

For skin irritations or vulnerary action (wound healing) - try calendula, chamomile, marshmallow, red clover, mullein, or comfrey.

For anti-inflammatory - try yarrow, St. John's Wort, wormwood, willow, arnica, turmeric or lemon grass.

For anti-pruritic action (stops itching) - try plantain, chickweed or lavender.

For rubifacient action (increases circulation and warms tissue) try ginger, cayenne, peppermint, rosemary, eucalyptus, or pine.

Tinctures

Tincture-style preparations

In general, a blend of alcohol and water acts as a better solvent for extracting constituents from plants. Nearly all-relevant ingredients in herbs will dissolve in this combination and at the same time it will act as a preservative.

Tinctures must be at least 25% alcohol to preserve them from spoilage. They are stronger than teas and generally they work quicker, and smaller dosing amounts are required by using this method. There are several other types of tinctures including vinegar/honey tinctures called oxymels, glycerin-based tincture, straight vinegar infusions and wine-based extracts.

There are two ways you can make your tincture, one is a basic one while the other one is more scientific and is more involved.

Type #1 Simple jar method

- To do this method you simply chop up your herbs and place them in a clear jar and pour vodka (or other 40% alcohol) over them to fully cover them. Label them with the name and date. Place the jar in an area that gets daylight and then shake jar once a day for 14 days. Strain well, discard herbs and store tincture in a dark jar for up to 3 years.

Type #2 Scientific method

- Fresh plant tinctures are generally done either at a 1:1 or 1:2 ratio. This means that you use one part plant (the first number in the ratio) to 2 parts liquid or menstrum (the second



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number in the ration). Because of the water content of fresh plants, tinctures made of fresh plant material are never done at less than 40% alcohol. A minimum of 25% alcohol is needed to maintain sterility of the tincture. Fresh plants contain approximately 15% water in their cells therefore when 40% alcohol is added it is diluted with that 15% water from the plant and the result is that only 25% strength of alcohol remains.

- Standard dry plant tinctures are generally done at 1:4 or 1:5 ratio but there are some exceptions. Refer to the chart on tincture ratios included in this section for further details. Dry plant tinctures can be done at a higher ratio because they do not contain significant amounts of water and therefore will not dilute the process. Because of the absence of water in the plant tissue, the returns on tinctures are less, with the plant absorbing much of the liquid and the extraction being more difficult than fresh plant material.
- To prepare your tincture, chop plant material fairly small. This includes crushing roots, seeds, and berries. In a clean, clear glass jar add the plant material and the menstrum (liquid), covering tightly and shaking well. Label with the name of tincture, date and ratio and alcohol percentage. Place in a warm light place, shaking mixture each day. After at least 2 weeks of maturation, you can strain off the tincture. Pour into a dark-coloured glass bottle, label, and store in a dark place.
- Tinctures will maintain their effectiveness for up to 3 years.

Herbal Syrup Recipe

1/4 cup fresh or 2 Tbsp. dried herbs of your choice (can do a single or combination of herbs)

3/4 cup water

1/2 cup sugar or raw honey (we used sugar as it makes a thicker syrup)

1 Tablespoon lemon juice

Gently boil the water and herbs for 2 minutes. Remove from heat and cover for 20 minutes. Strain the herbs from the boiling water (squeeze them to get all the water) and rinse any herbs from the pan then combine sugar and herb water in the same saucepan. Slowly bring to a boil until the sugar and herb water have created a syrupy consistency. (If checking temperature this is between 105-110C/220 -225 F). Stir in the lemon juice. Pour into a clean, hot pint jar and let cool. Refrigerate in between uses. (For longer shelf life add a ¼ brandy to the mixture).