The MOUNTAIN ROSE HERBS Guide to Herbal Preparations

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Herbal Infusions & Decoctions

Tea is a water extract of herbs called an infusion. Decoctions are simmered teas, perfect for the extraction of hard roots, dried berries, bark, and seeds.

HOT INFUSIONS

Hot infusions draw out vitamins, enzymes, and aromatic volatile oils. A few good herbs for hot infusions include chamomile, holy basil, ginger, nettle, peppermint, and skullcap.

Basic Method

Scoop 1 to 3 tablespoons of dried herb into a strainer. Heat 1 cup of water until it boils. Place strainer in your cup. Pour hot water over herbs and cover to keep the essential oils from escaping. Steep for 15 minutes to 1 hour and strain. Enjoy!

COLD INFUSIONS

Cold Infusions are ideal for mucilagenous (or some might say "slimy") herbs. They also work well for herbs with delicate essential oils or a bitter flavor. A few good herbs for cold infusions include marshmallow root, chia seed, seaweeds, and slippery elm.

Basic Method

Fill a quart jar with cold water. Then bundle 1 oz. of herb in cheesecloth and slightly moisten the bundled herb with water. Submerge the bundle just below the water in the jar. Drape the tied end over the lip of the jar and secure by loosely screwing on the jar's lid. Allow to infuse overnight. Remove bundle and enjoy!

Trick of the Trade

Use a sprout screen secured over the mouth of a jar with a standard jar band for a cheesecloth-free way to strain your infusions.

DECOCTIONS

Decoctions are simmered teas that are perfect for the extraction of hard roots, dried berries, barks, and seeds.

Basic Method Place 3 tablespoons of dried herb into a small saucepan. Cover herb with a quart of cold water. Slowly heat water to a simmer and cover. Allow to gently simmer for 20 to 45 minutes. Strain the herb and reserve the tea in a quart jar. Pour additional hot water back through the herb in the strainer to fill your jar.

Fun Tip! Add a bit of honey, fruit juice, licorice root powder, or stevia leaf powder to flavor your infusion or decoction. Freeze in ice cube trays or popsicle molds. Kids love these herbal ice pops!

TINCTURES

Tinctures are concentrated herbal extracts which use alcohol as the solvent. You can use any spirit you like, but we prefer something neutral like vodka to fully experience the flavor of the herb.



Tinctures can be made with fresh or dried flowers, leaves, roots, barks, or berries. They can be taken by the dropper, diluted in tea or sparkling water, or even used in salad dressings!

TINCTURES: THE FOLK METHOD

Simple, practical, and efficient, this method allows you to estimate your measurements by eye. The only supplies you'll need are organic herbs, glass jars, a knife or chopper, metal funnel, cheesecloth, alcohol, and amber glass dropper bottles.



TINCTURES HOW MUCH PLANT MATERIAL TO USE?

We prefer to use the folk method, which means eyeballing measurements. The amount of herbal material needed will vary by type used and size of jar you choose. Here's a guide:

Fresh leaves & flowers: 2/3 to 3/4 of jar Fresh roots, barks & berries: 1/3 to 1/2 of jar Dried leaves & flowers: 1/2 to 3/4 of jar Dried roots, barks & berries: 2/3 to 3/4 of jar



TINCTURES INSTRUCTIONS

Use finely cut herbal material for maximum surface area. Chop or grind just before use to release the aromatics and plant oils. Fill jar with herb using guide on previous page. Pour alcohol to the very top of the jar to cover the plants completely! Jar should appear full of herb, but herb should move freely when shaken.

Note: dried roots, barks, and berries will double in size when reconstituted!

TINCTURES ALCOHOL PERCENTAGES



40%-50% (80-90 PROOF VODKA)

- "Standard" percentage range for tinctures.
- Good for most dried herbs and fresh herbs that are not super juicy.
- Good for extraction of water soluble properties.

67.5%–70% (1/2 80 PROOF VODKA + 1/2 190 PROOF GRAIN ALCOHOL)

- Extracts the most volatile aromatic properties.
- Good for fresh high-moisture herbs like lemon balm, berries, and aromatic roots.
- The higher alcohol percentage will draw out more of the plant juices.

85%-95% (190 PROOF GRAIN ALCOHOL)

- Good for dissolving gums and resins, but not necessary for most plant material.
- Extracts the aromatics and essential oils bound in a plant that do not dissipate easily.
- The alcohol strength can produce a tincture that is not easy to take. Stronger is not always better!
- Often used for drop dosage plants.
- Will totally dehydrate herbs.

TINCTURES EXTRACTION & BOTTLING TIME

Store your tincture in a cool, dry, dark place. Shake several times a week. If the alcohol evaporates a bit and the herb is not completely submerged, top off jar with more alcohol. Herbs exposed to air can introduce mold and bacteria into your tincture. Extract for 2 to 4 weeks.

Time to squeeze! Line a fine-mesh strainer with cheesecloth and hold over a bowl. Pour tincture into cloth. Press gently to get every last drop of herbal goodness. Then pour the contents of the bowl into an amber glass bottle.

Keep extracts in a cool, dark place, and your tinctures will last for many years.

TINCTURES LABELS

This last step is perhaps the most important of all!

Once you've strained and bottled your tincture, be sure to label each bottle with as much detail as possible. You'll be so happy to have this information next time you tincture the same herb. Don't lean on your sense of taste or smell alone. Regardless of how well-honed your organoleptic skills may be, tinctures can trick even the most experienced herbalist. Skipping this step will surely lead to a dusty collection of unused mystery extracts.

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Important details to include on your labels:

Common Name Latin Name Part Used Fresh/Dried Alcohol % Habitat/Source Date Dosage

DOWNLOAD OUR FREE DIY LABEL TEMPLATE ONLINE!

MUSHROOM DOUBLE EXTRACTION

Mushrooms have risen in popularity over the last few years. From shiitake and reishi, to chaga and maitake, more and more folks are feeling drawn to these fascinating and useful fungi.

Making a "double extraction" is our preferred method since mushrooms contain some constituents that are water-soluble, called beta-glucans, and some that are alcohol-soluble, called triterpenes. A double extraction effectively pulls out these constituents with the added benefit of being shelf-stable!

MUSHROOM DOUBLE EXTRACTION

Ingredients

- 80 proof or higher alcohol (we use vodka)
- Organic dried mushrooms such as reishi, maitake, chaga, or shiitake
- Spring water

Equipment

- Quart glass jars
- Stock pot
- Fine-mesh strainer
- Cheesecloth

MUSHROOM DOUBLE EXTRACTION INSTRUCTIONS

Make an alcohol extract by filling a glass jar halfway with dried mushrooms. Fill jar with alcohol, making sure that it completely covers the mushrooms, but leave about a 1/2 inch of space at the top of the jar. Let it sit for a month, shaking daily. After a month, strain mushroom-infused alcohol into another glass jar using cheesecloth and mesh strainer and set aside.

Next, make a water extract by bringing a half gallon of water to a simmer in a stock pot. Add the mushrooms from the alcohol extract to the simmering water. Simmer the mushrooms for about 2 hours, until the water has reduced to approximately 1 to 2 cups. Make sure to keep an eye on the water level, as you don't want it to completely evaporate. You may need to add water to the pot throughout the process. Let it cool. Strain and compost the mushrooms, reserving the mushroom-infused water.

Combine the water extract with the alcohol extract. The final product is your mushroom double extract! The alcohol percentage should be somewhere between 25-35%, making it shelf-stable. Shiitake Lentinula edodes dried double extraction 4/29/16

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GLYCERITES

Have you been searching for an alternative to alcohol-based tinctures? Maybe you like your remedies a little on the sweet side? A great solvent for preserving plant constituents without the use of alcohol, glycerine extracts are an excellent choice for administering herbal support to children or people with alcohol sensitivities.

These concoctions (also known as "glycerites") have a shelf-life of 14 to 24 months.



GLYCERITES

Ratios: A mixture of 60% or more glycerine to 40% or less water is a safe ratio.

If you are working with fresh, moist herbs, you can use 100% glycerine for your extract. Just be sure to muddle well.

Fill a glass jar 1/2 full with dried herb or 2/3 full with fresh herb. In a separate jar, mix 3 parts organic vegetable glycerine and 1 part distilled water. Shake to combine. Pour liquid mixture over the herb and completely cover to fill the jar. Label container with date, ratio of glycerine to water, and herbs used. Agitate daily for 4 to 6 weeks. Strain with cheesecloth, bottle, and label.

WONDERING WHICH HERBS TO TRY FIRST?

Burdock, chamomile, cleavers, dandelion, echinacea, elderflowers, fennel, ginger, goldenseal, hawthorn, mugwort, mullein, nettle, oat tops, peppermint, skullcap, and valerian make great choices.

HERBAL-INFUSED VINEGARS

Did you know that vinegar can be infused with herbs to create wonderful alcohol-free extracts? While not as potent as alcohol-based tinctures, an herbal vinegar extract is another effective alternative for children or anyone abstaining from alcohol.

Vinegar has been used for thousands of years to preserve food, deodorize, and to make traditional formulas. In fact, before stills were used to produce high-proof alcohol, most herbal extracts were made with solvents like water, wine, and vinegar. Extractions can be made with vinegar alone or with both vinegar and alcohol to create an acetous tincture. This method will release more active properties than vinegar alone, but straight vinegar extracts still have a lot to offer if properly prepared.

Dried herbs tend to produce the most effective vinegar extracts, but fresh herbs can be used to make nutritive or culinary recipes, since the vinegar will extract minerals as well as the flavor of the herbs.

HERBAL-INFUSED VINEGARS

Chop or grind your dried herb to a coarse powder. You can also find many powdered herbs online. Fill 1/5 of your sterilized glass jar with the herb. Pour organic apple cider vinegar over the herb until the jar is filled to the top. Cover tightly and allow to extract for 14 days in a cool, dark place. Be sure to shake the jar daily.

After 2 weeks, strain the herb through cheesecloth. Set the strained liquid in a capped jar on a shelf and allow the sediment to settle overnight. Decant the clear liquid layer into another sterilized jar using a strainer. Cap tightly, label, and store for up to 6 months in a cool, dark place.

If you are infusing the vinegar with roots or barks, there is one more step. Once the mixture has extracted for 2 weeks and the herbs have been strained out, heat the infusion just short of boiling and filter through cloth while hot. The heat will help congeal the albumin in the solution that can then be removed when straining. Excess albumin can encourage your extract to spoil quickly.

Note: Due to the acid content in vinegar, be sure to avoid direct contact with your teeth. You may want to mix each dose with water to dilute the acidity.

FIRE TONIC

Fire tonics (tradtionally known as "fire cider") are a popular folk remedy. The tasty combination of vinegar infused with powerful spices makes this recipe especially pleasant and easy to incorporate into your daily diet to help maintain natural health processes like digestion, and to get you nice and warmed up on cold days.

Because this is a folk preparation, the ingredients can change from year to year depending on when you make it and what's growing around you. The standard base ingredients are apple cider vinegar, garlic, onion, ginger, horseradish, and spicy peppers, but there are plenty of other herbs that can be thrown in for added kick. Some people like to bury their fire cider jar in the ground for a month while it extracts and then dig it up during a great feast to celebrate the changing of the seasons.

Optional Ingredients:

Thyme, horseradish root powder, star anise, schisandra berries, astragalus, burdock root, oregano, peppercorns, beet root powder, habanero powder, bird's eye chili powder, whole chili peppers, orange, grapefruit, and lime.

FIRE TONIC Ingredients

- 1/2 cup fresh grated organic ginger root
- 1/2 cup fresh grated organic horseradish root
- 1 medium organic onion, chopped
- 10 cloves of organic garlic, crushed or chopped
- 2 organic jalapeno peppers, chopped
- Zest and juice from 1 organic lemon
- Several sprigs of fresh organic rosemary or 2 Tbsp of dried rosemary leaves
- 1 Tbsp organic turmeric powder
- 1/4 tsp organic cayenne powder
- 1/2 to 1 quart organic apple cider vinegar
- 1/4 to 1/2 raw local honey to taste

Directions

Prepare all of your ingredients. If you've never grated fresh horseradish, be prepared for a powerful sinus-opening experience! Place all roots, fruits, and herbs into a 1-quart glass jar. Then fill jar with vinegar. Use a piece of natural parchment paper in between the jar mouth and lid to keep vinegar from corroding the metal (or use a plastic lid if you have one). Shake well! Store in a dark, cool place for one month and remember to shake daily.

After one month, use cheesecloth to strain out pulp, pouring vinegar into a clean jar. Be sure to squeeze as much of the liquid goodness as you can from the pulp while straining. Next comes the honey! Add 1/4 cup of honey and stir until incorporated. Taste your cider and add another 1/4 cup until you reach the desired sweetness.

ASHWAGANDHA CHOCOLATE BITES

Ingredients

- 1/3 cup organic tahini
- 1/4 cup + 1 Tbsp organic almond butter (or nut butter of your choice)
- 1/4 cup + 2 Tbsp local honey
- 1/4 cup fair trade, organic dark chocolate, chopped
- 2 Tbsp organic ashwagandha powder
- 2 Tbsp organic cacao powder (plus more as needed)
- 2 Tbsp organic hemp seeds
- 1 tsp organic cinnamon powder
- 1 tsp organic ginger powder
- 1 tsp organic cardamom powder
- 1 tsp organic nutmeg powder
- 1/2 tsp organic vanilla extract (optional)
- Organic coconut flakes

Directions

Add tahini, almond butter, and honey into a medium bowl and mix until smooth. Add herb powders and mix until well combined. Mix in vanilla extract, hemp seeds, and chopped chocolate. Add more cacao powder, a little at a time, until dough is thick enough to hold its shape. Once the dough is thick enough and doesn't stick to the sides of the bowl, roll into 1-inch balls. Coat with coconut flakes or hemp seeds. Store in a sealed container in the refrigerator for up to one week.

TURMERIC LATTE

Turmeric Lattes (often called "Golden Milk") have become all the rage, but this Ayurvedic recipe has a long history of maintaining wellbeing. To make the curcumin in turmeric more bioavailable, it's important to use a little fat and black pepper. Interestingly, in many traditional Indian preparations, turmeric has often been combined with some kind of fat, like milk or coconut oil, as well as black pepper. This recipe is the perfect after-dinner treat!

Ingredients

- 1 cup organic milk of choice
- 1 tsp organic unrefined coconut oil
- 1/2 tsp organic turmeric root powder
- Pinch of ground organic black pepper
- Raw local honey, to taste

Directions

In a saucepan, gently heat milk, coconut oil, turmeric, and black pepper for 5 minutes. The coconut oil should be melted and the milk warmed through; be careful not to boil. Use a whisk or immersion blender to create a foam and continue to blend until frothy. Strain and sweeten with honey.

HERBAL SYRUPS

Syrup is a great way to administer those not-so-pleasant tasting herbs, especially for the little ones. Also a versatile preparation for culinary recipes, herb-infused syrup makes a great addition to teas, desserts, bubbly beverages, cocktails, or simply on its own by the spoonful! Syrups can be prepared with sugar, but we love to use raw local honey.

The best thing about syrups is that like tea or tinctures, you can formulate with any combination of herbs to suit your needs. While elderberry syrup is the most popular, we also enjoy ginger, thyme, elecampane, chamomile, peppermint, marshmallow root, schisandra berry, echinacea root, elderflower, hawthorn berry, holy basil, and hop flower!

Tip: For proper preservation, a ratio of 1:1 (tea to honey) is recommended. You can also add some tincture to help preserve your syrup longer and give it an extra boost.

HERBAL SYRUPS Berry Rooty Syrup

Ingredients

- 3 cups cold water
- 3/4 cup organic elderberries
- 1/4 cup organic schisandra berries
- 1/4 cup organic eleuthero root
- 1/4 cup organic echinacea root
- 1 organic cinnamon stick
- 3/4 to 1 cup raw local honey
- 1.5 oz. brandy (optional)

Directions

Combine herbs with cold water in a pot and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and allow herbs to simmer for 30 to 40 minutes. Remove from heat and mash the berries in the liquid mixture. Strain the herbs through cheesecloth and squeeze out the juice. Measure the liquid and add an equal amount of honey. Gently heat the honey and juice for a few minutes until well combined. Do not boil! Stir in brandy and bottle in sterilized glass containers. Label and keep refrigerated for up to 6 months.

Optional: Before bottling, add 1 part tincture or brandy to 3 parts syrup to extend the shelf-life.





HERBAL-INFUSED OILS

Simply infusing oil with herbs can transform them into healthful preparations. You can use herbal-infused oils as the base for homemade massage oils, salves, lip balms, facial serums, hair treatments, body creams, soaps, and more!

A variety of dried herbs and organic carrier oils can be used depending on your specific needs. Jojoba oil and olive oil are wise choices because they have a long shelf life and are suitable for a variety of topical applications.

HERBS TO INFUSE

Arnica flowers Calendula flowers Cayenne peppers Cedar tips Chamomile Chickweed Comfrey Lavender Lemon balm Mullein flowers

Myrrh Peppermint Plantain Poke root Rose Rosemary St. John's wort Thyme Vanilla beans Yarrow

Feel free to combine herbs or infused oils to create special blends. Some ideas:

Floral Oil: This aromatic oil smells divine and will lift the spirit. Apply to the skin after a shower, bath, or during a massage. To make, infuse organic rose petals, lavender flowers, and/or chamomile flowers in organic jojoba oil.

Sleep Oil: A fragrant blend of relaxing herbs, use after a bath or shower to help find tranquility. You can also rub on the temples at night before bed. To make, infuse a mixture of organic hops, chamomile flowers, and lavender flowers in organic olive or jojoba oil.

FOLK METHOD

Moisture will cause your oil to go rancid, so we prefer dried herbs in infusions. You can find an extensive selection of dried herbs online.

Place dried herbs in a clean quart jar. Pour enough oil to cover herbs by at least 1 inch and leave at least 1/2 inch of space at the top of the jar so the herbs will have room to expand. If your herbs soak up all of the oil, then pour more oil on top to ensure that the herbs are completely covered. Stir well and cap the jar tightly.

Place the jar on a warm, sunny windowsill and shake once or more per day. You can also cover the jar with a brown paper bag if you prefer that to direct sunlight.

After 4 to 6 weeks, strain the herbs out of the oil using cheesecloth. Make sure to squeeze out every precious drop of oil! Pour into glass bottles and store in a cool dark place. Vitamin E oil may also be added to prolong the shelf-life. The oil should keep for at least a year if stored properly

QUICK METHOD

Another way to infuse oils in a pinch uses direct heat. Much care needs to be taken when creating herbal oils this way, so you don't want to burn your herbs!

Place herbs in a crock-pot, double boiler, or electric yogurt maker, and cover with organic extra virgin olive oil (or other carrier oil of choice), leaving at least an inch or two of oil above the herbs. Gently heat the herbs over very low heat (preferably between 100 to 140 degrees Fahrenheit) for 1 to 5 hours until the oil takes on the color and scent of the herb. Turn off the heat and allow to cool.

Once the oil is ready, strain using cheesecloth and bottle into dry, sterilized amber bottles for storage in a cool, dark place. Vitamin E oil may be added at this point to prolong the shelf-life.

HERBAL SALVES

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Salves are such a simple, effective, and useful traditional preparation! They can easily be slipped into a small bag, pocket, or first aid kit. Although semi-solid at room temperature, salves soften once applied to the skin, making them less messy to apply than oils. They also make great gifts and are an easy and approachable way to introduce newbies to herbalism. Plus, salves can be crafted for a wide variety of topical uses. The addition of beeswax offers additional benefits including soothing, emollient, and nourishing.

SALVE METHOD

- 8 oz. herbal-infused oil(s) of your choice. Choose one or a combination.
- 1 oz. beeswax (use carnauba wax for a vegan alternative)
- Vitamin E oil (optional)
- 10-20 drops essential oil of choice (optional, popular essential oils commonly used are lavender and tea tree)
- Glass jars or tin containers

Directions

Place herbal-infused oil and beeswax over a double boiler and gently warm over low heat until the beeswax melts. Remove from heat and add the essential oils and Vitamin E oil, if using. Quickly pour into tins or glass jars and allow to cool completely. Salves should be stored in a cool location where they will remain semi-solid and will not continually melt and re-solidify. If stored correctly, salves will last for 1 to 3 years. Yields 8 oz.

Tip: The consistency of salves can easily be adjusted depending on your preferences. Use less beeswax for a softer salve and more beeswax if you prefer a firmer salve. You can test the consistency by placing a few spoons in the freezer before making your salve. When the beeswax melts, pour a little salve on one of the cold spoons and place it back into the freezer for a couple minutes. This will simulate what the final consistency will be like. Once cool, you can make adjustments by adding more oil for a softer salve or more beeswax for a firmer salve.

HERBAL CHEST RUBS

Need something cooling and soothing but want to steer clear of petroleum-based products? Unfortunately, most of the chest rubs we grew up using are made with petroleum jelly and turpentine. Such a shame! Making your own rubs at home is super easy and allows you to harness the power of plants without relying on a byproduct of the oil industry. All you need is a simple salve base of organic carrier oil and beeswax to get started. You can then add essential oils or menthol crystals as needed.

You may be familiar with the overpowering scent of menthol, but what exactly are menthol crystals? Menthol is a solid constituent of mint oil that gives the plant its strong fragrance. These potent crystals are made from cornmint (*Mentha arvensis*) essential oil using a natural process. The distilled essential oil is chilled to a temperature of -22 degrees Celsius to isolate and crystallize the menthol. These crystals dissolve readily in alcohol and can be dissolved in water or oil at a melting point of 111.2 degrees Farenheit. Menthol crystals are often used in cosmetics, salves, creams, throat lozenges, toothpaste, mouthwash, foot sprays, shampoos, liniments, shaving creams, and cooling gels. Since menthol crystals are so concentrated, only a small amount is needed to make these recipes.

BASIC VAPOR RUB

- 8 oz. organic carrier oil (we like almond oil)
- 3/4 oz. to 1 oz. natural beeswax, pastilles or coarsely chopped
- 25 drops organic eucalyptus essential oil
- 10 drops organic peppermint essential oil

Directions

Depending on the texture you want, measure out the beeswax. Less wax will yield more of an ointment viscosity, while using the whole ounce of wax will create a more solid, consistency. Place beeswax and oil in the top of a double boiler and heat gently until the beeswax melts. Remove from the stovetop and stir in essential oils, counting each drop carefully. Immediately pour the mixture into glass jars and place lids loosely over the jars so the oils don't escape. Allow to cool completely before placing caps onto the containers.



MENTHOL CHEST BALM

- 8 oz. organic carrier oil (we like olive oil)
- 1/2 1 tsp organic menthol crystals
- 3/4 oz. 1 oz. natural beeswax, coarsely chopped or use pastilles
- 20 drops organic eucalyptus essential oil
- 10 drops organic rosemary essential oil

Directions

As with the Basic Vapor Rub, less wax will yield more of an ointment viscosity, while the whole ounce of wax will create a more solid balm. Heat the olive oil and beeswax in a double boiler until the beeswax melts. Remove from heat. Add menthol crystals (1/2 tsp for a gentle balm or 1 tsp for a stronger remedy) and essential oils, stir until dissolved, and quickly pour into jars. Immediately place lids loosely over the jars so the oils don't escape. Allow to cool completely before placing caps onto the containers.

Note: The menthol crystals may be irritating when inhaled, so always use them in a well-ventilated area or wear a mask, if needed.

Find Supplies Online:

Organic Bulk Herbs Organic Carrier Oils Organic Essential Oils Organic Glycerine Organic Menthol Crystals Butters and Waxes Tea Supplies Amber Dropper Bottles Salve Tins **Glass Jars** Cheesecloth **Funnels & Strainers** Herbalism Books

